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HOUSE & GARDEN

THE MAGAZINE OF CREATIVE LIVING
Volume 159, Number 7

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House & Garden (ISSN 0018-6406) is published monthly by The Condé Nast Publications Inc., 9100 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills CA 90212. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: 350 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10017. Bernard H. Leser, President. Eric C. Anderson, Vice-President, Treasurer. Pamela van Zandt, Vice-President, Secretary. Second class postage paid at Beverly Hills CA and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions, in U.S. and possessions: $24 for one year, $46 for two years; in Canada: $38 for one year, $74 for two years. Elsewhere: $41 for one year, payable in advance. Single copies: U.S. $4, Canada $4.50. For subscriptions, address changes, and adjustments, write to House & Garden, Box 5202, Boulder CO 80322. Eight weeks are required for change of address. Please give both new address and old as printed on last label. First copy of a new subscription will be mailed within eight weeks after receipt of order. Authorized as second class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, and for payment of postage in cash. For further information about anything appearing in this issue, please write to House & Garden Reader Information, Condé Nast Building, 350 Madison Ave., New York NY 10017. Manuscripts, drawings, and other material submitted must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. However, House & Garden cannot be responsible for unsolicited material. Copyright © 1987 by The Condé Nast Publications Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A. **Postmaster: Send address changes to House & Garden, Box 5202, Boulder CO 80322. SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES: Please write to House & Garden, Box 5202, Boulder CO 80322**
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BRITISH HOUSE & GARDEN Vogue House, Hanover Square, London W1R 0AD
FRENCH MAISON & JARDIN 8–10, boulevard du Montparnasse, Paris 75724/Cedex 15
ITALIAN CASA VOGUE piazza Castello 27, 20121 Milan
BRAZILIAN CASA VOGUE BRASIL Av. Brasil 1456, C.E.P. 01430–Jardim America, São Paulo
AUSTRALIAN VOGUE LIVING 49 Clarence St., Sydney, N.S.W. 2000

HOUSE & GARDEN is published by The Condé Nast Publications Inc.
Condé Nast Building, 350 Madison Ave., New York NY 10017
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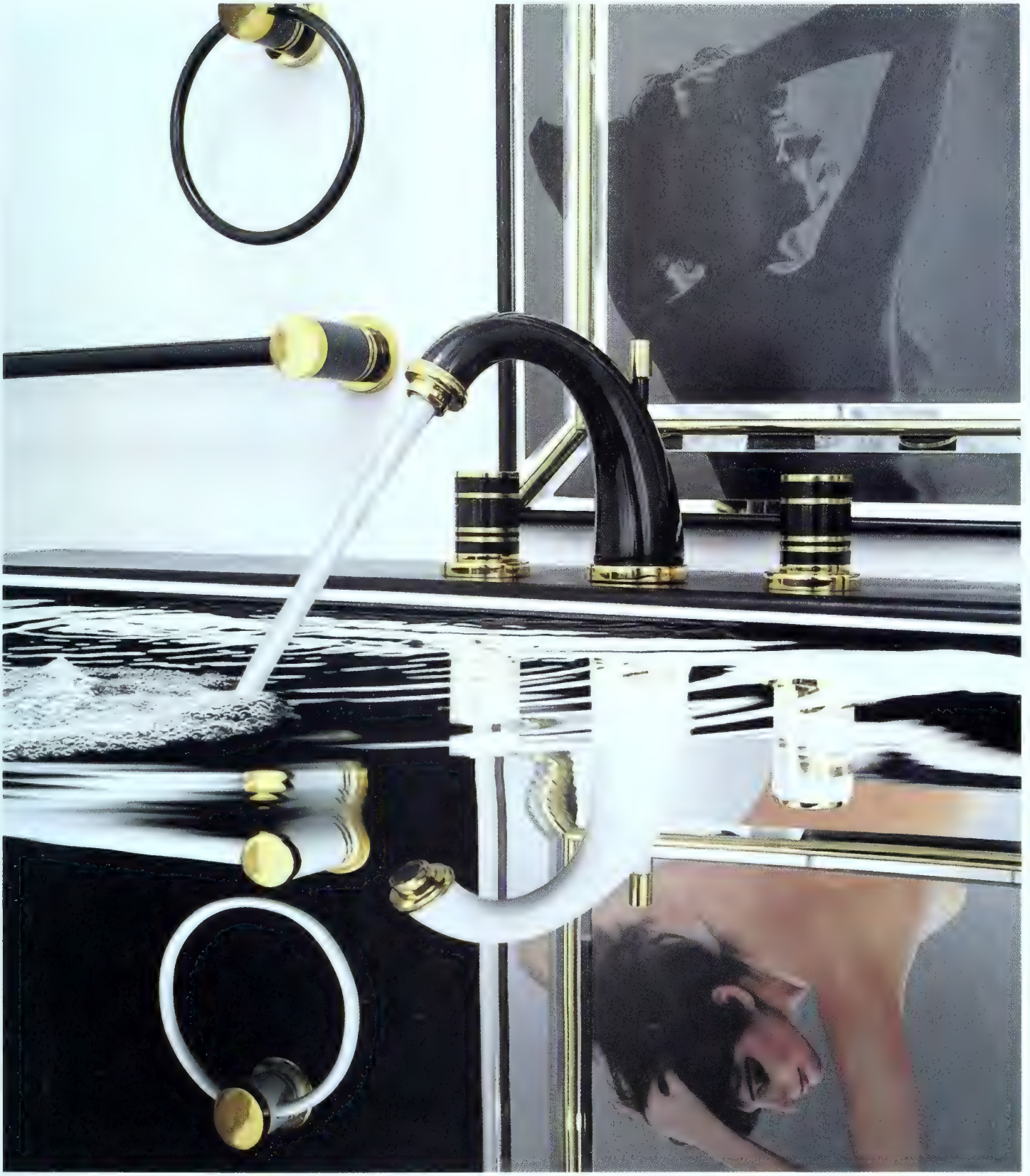
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Our younger daughter, Lauren, turned seventeen yesterday. She'll be off to college before we know it, so Jane and I decided it might be time to leave the brownstone we've lived in for all of Lauren's life and find ourselves an apartment in Manhattan. We did, much more quickly than we anticipated, and tomorrow we move back to the neighborhood we started our New York life in—the Upper West Side.

Sorting through the accumulations of four people over seventeen years has been quite a process, and it has made me more aware than usual this spring of the changing seasons of both our internal and external lives.

The new apartment is going to be a series of white rooms: linen white, antique white, china white. Although the rooms won't be all white in the sense that Mark Hampton describes in On Decorating this month, page 44, it has been fascinating to contemplate our new apartment in its various all-white tones before our things are delivered. We think the things—the Eames furniture, the antique family china, the modern paintings and glass, and the books we have collected—will fit into our new spaces surprisingly well. We'll know better tomorrow.

Now secretly what I hope to achieve once we're in residence is the mood of Dominique de Menil's rooms in Texas which we show beginning on page 120 just as the Menil Collection museum opens in Houston. The Philip Johnson–designed house, with interiors by Charles James, sets a standard all its own, as Rosamond Bernier says in her text, and it's a standard that suits me fine, for it is a standard not only of special taste but also of a special creative life. Martin Filler's companion piece on the new museum designed by Renzo Piano is on page 74. We think that the architect fulfills Dominique de Menil's wish for the building to "look small on the outside and be big on the inside."

Even as we salute the new spaces being created today, we celebrate the efforts of others to save the old ones. Such an effort is described in two articles on the Whipple House and garden in Ipswich, Massachusetts. Built about 1640 (with a later addition by 1683), the Whipple House is one of the best examples of our earliest houses and reveals that the Puritans also understood the relationship between inner and outer beauty. After it was moved to its present site in Ipswich, an appropriate seventeenth-century garden was developed on its corner lot. Our story on the house begins on page 110; the one on the garden on page 20.



Dominique de Menil's Houston house has color schemes throughout by Charles James: here, the dressing room.

Efforts to preserve and present the best of our heritage are not limited to America, and this issue's report on a unique example of such activity is Traudl Lessing's story, page 100, on the Ronald Lauders in Austria. When the U.S. ambassador and his wife, Jo Carole, took on their tour of duty in Vienna, they decided to decorate the guest wing of the embassy residence with American folk art. Longtime collectors of Viennese art and objects, the Lauders will eventually bring back their furniture and art treasures to New York, but the folk art–filled rooms will stay in Vienna as a legacy to their successors.

The Lauders' successful mix of things Austrian and things American extends to their dining table, so we've included their chef's recipe for veal goulash in our story, page 176.

As I gear up for our move tomorrow, it fascinates me to think about the move of Dominique de Menil's art into the new Menil Collection museum, the movement of things American to Austria and things Viennese to New York, and even the move of a seventeenth-century house and garden to a corner lot in Ipswich, Mass.

There is a rhythm to life, and even as we prepared for our move, a young family—father, mother, and little daughter—arrived to talk about renting our Park Slope house in Brooklyn. When we asked them where they live now, they said Riverside Drive and 93rd Street—the exact spot we had moved from with Lauren's sister, Amy, our first little girl, seventeen years ago.

OBERTO GILI

Lou Gropp

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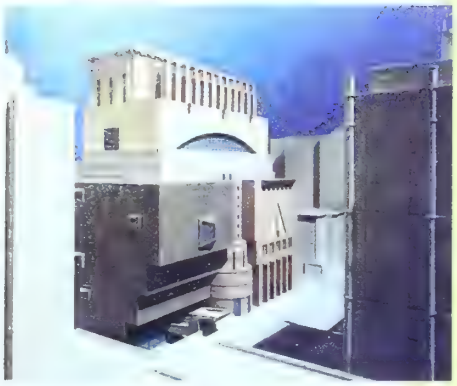
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A BLENDING OF ART AND MACHINE

JOURNAL

On the arts scene



Graves's Whitney #1



Graves's Whitney #2

SQUARE ONE, ROUND TWO

Stung by a virtually unprecedented outpouring of protest from both the public and the architectural profession, New York's Guggenheim and Whitney museums sent their respective architects back to their drawing boards for revised versions of expansion plans originally presented in 1985. The results, though unlikely to quell dissent, could well win city planning approval. Michael Graves's comparatively pared-down Postmodern addition next to and on top of Marcel Breuer's Whitney will continue to outrage foes of Graves's controversial historicizing style, while Gwathmey Siegel's relatively bland Modernist tower will still be a defacement of Frank Lloyd Wright's last masterpiece. Neither revision is in any fundamental sense better than the initial proposals. Although the new Whitney scheme is some sixty percent less bulky on top than the first Graves design, it has also lost its oddball sparkle and coarse vigor in the process. Gwathmey Siegel's new Guggenheim tower is less protuberant, but only marginally less offensive, and remains an irredeemably awful idea. Net gain on both: zero. *Martin Filler*



Gwathmey Siegel's Guggenheim #1



DAN CORNISH ESTO

Gwathmey Siegel's Guggenheim #2

FEDERAL REVIVAL

The original Federal Edifice float was pulled by ten white horses in the Grand Federal Procession on July 4, 1788, marking the ratification of the Constitution. The Carpenters' Company of Philadelphia commissioned painter Charles Willson Peale to design a float "to honor the craftsmen who built our country." This domed Neoclassical temple, *right,* led the procession of 450 tradesmen in the parade, and in 1887 a smaller version was featured in the centennial procession. This year, on September 17, a full-scale replica will lead the city's bicentennial Constitution Day celebration. *Jennifer Royall*



ANCIENT INTERIORS

First in an ambitious five-volume series, *A History of Private Life: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium,* edited by Paul Veyne (Harvard/Belknap, $29.50), vividly evokes rooms like the Met's Roman chamber, *left,* from Boscoreale, c. A.D. 79.



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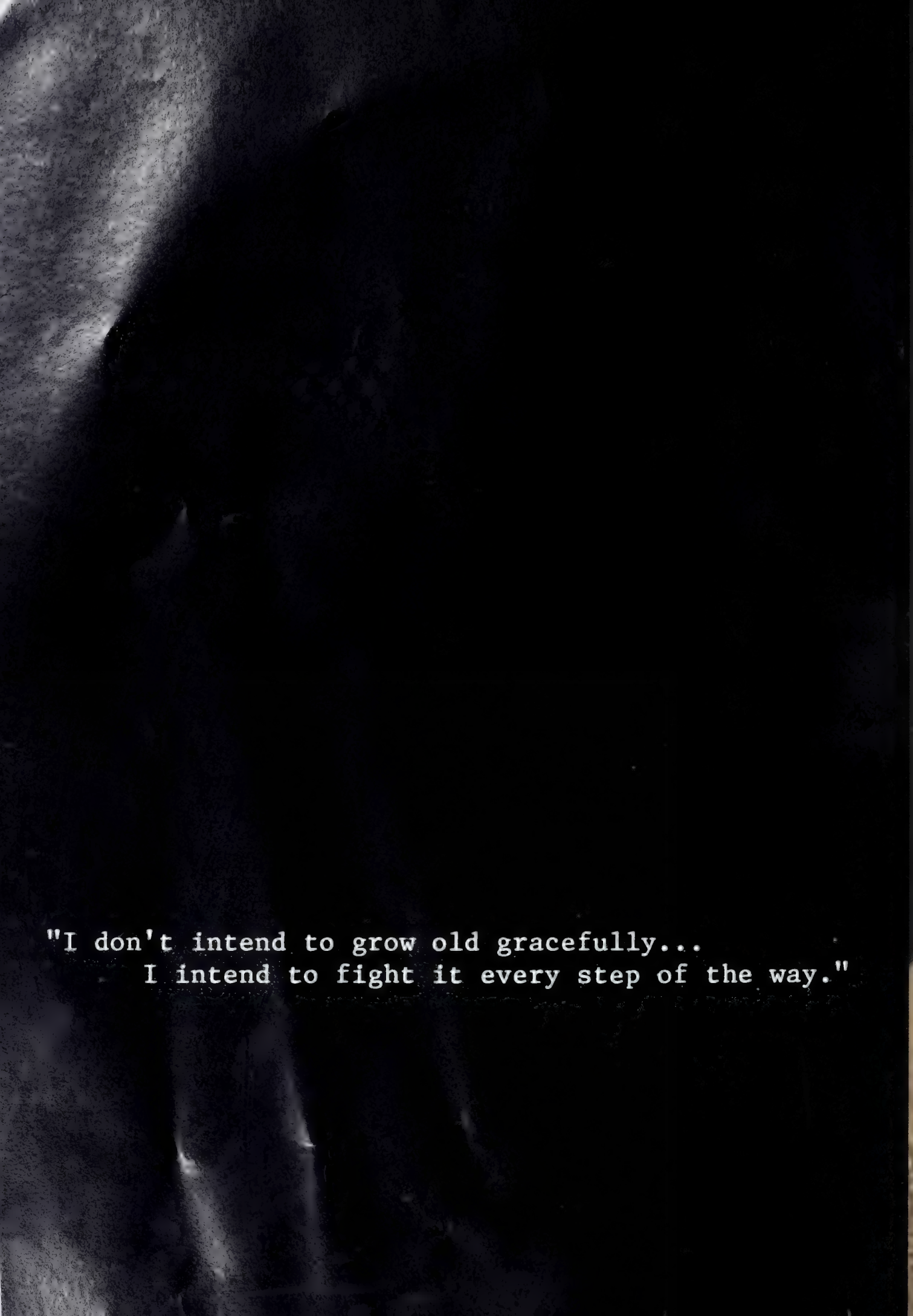
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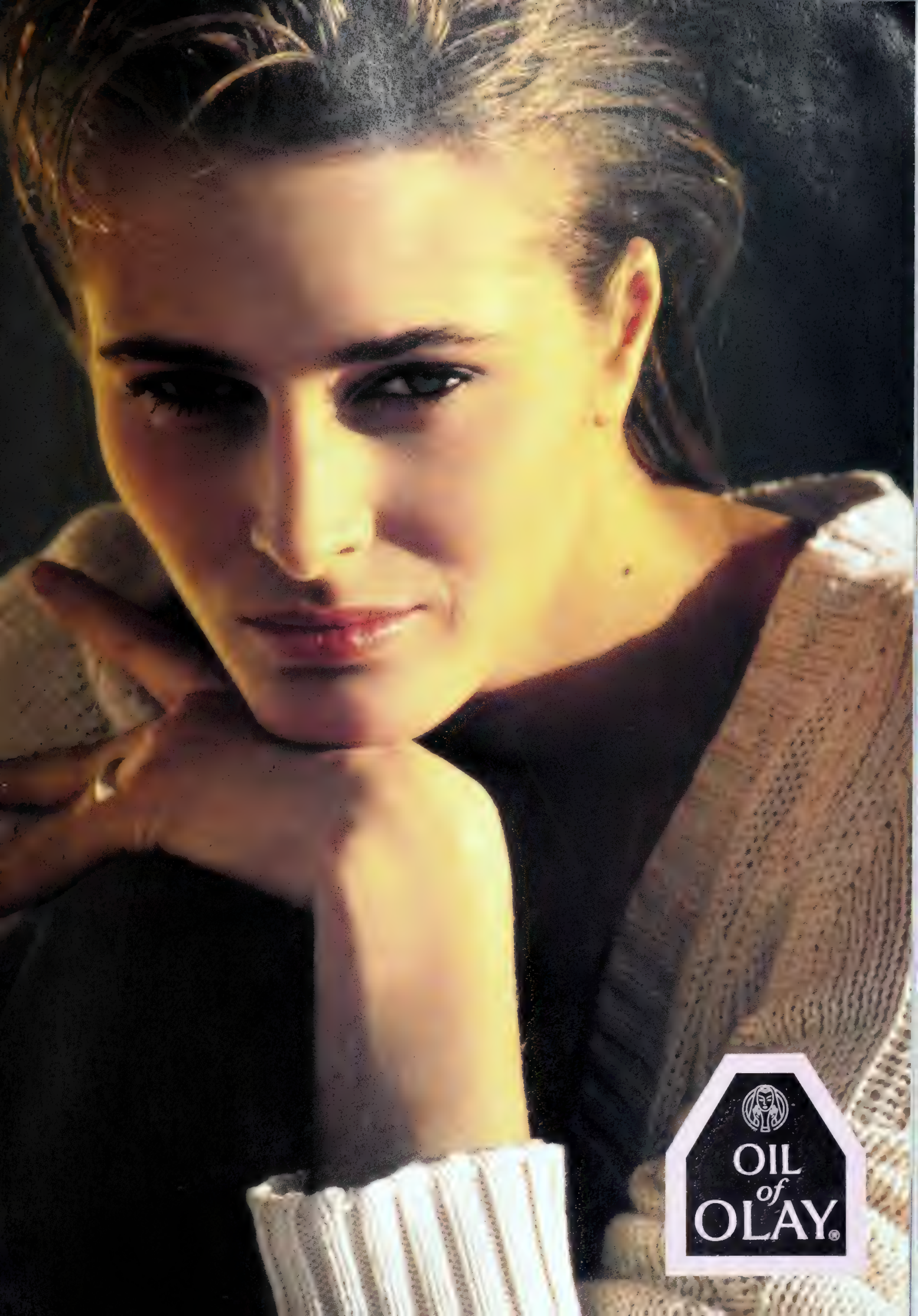
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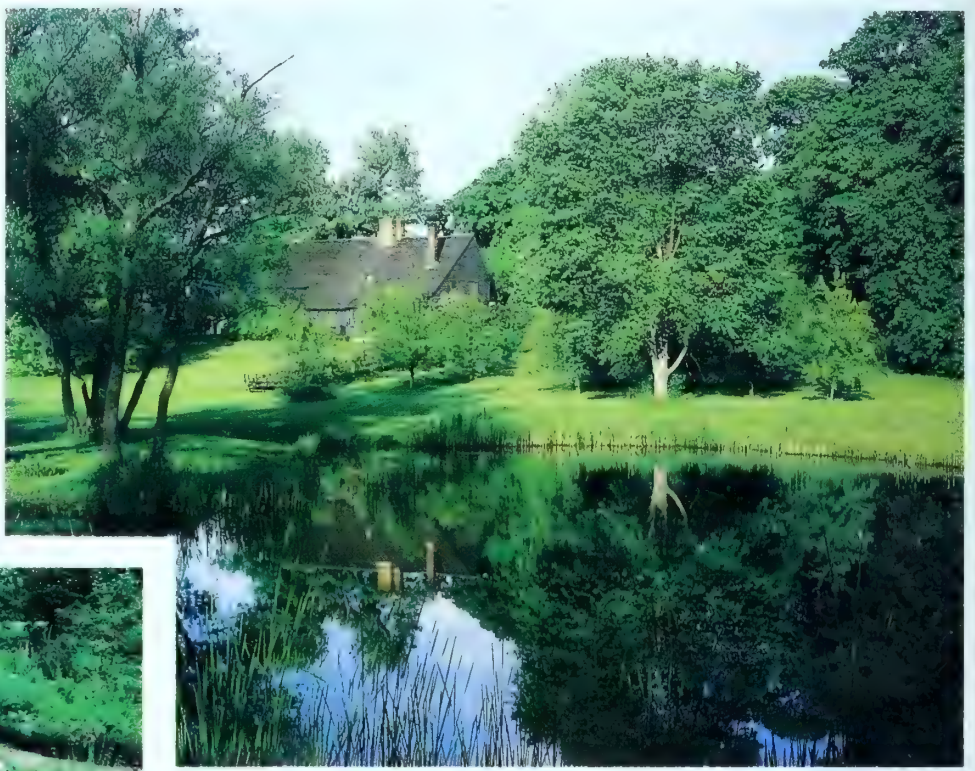
"I don't intend to grow old gracefully...
I intend to fight it every step of the way."

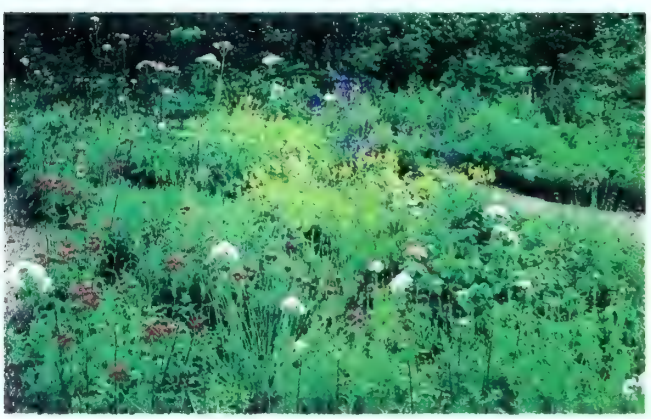

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RE-CREATING A SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY GARDEN

By Ann Leighton

Historic garden restoration implies preexisting gardens, fallen upon hard times, that can be put back again to their original state. The term itself rules out the substitution of inspired guesses by talented interpreters of earlier times who use modern plant materials. However lovely these interpretive gardens may be and however satisfying to the tourists who expect to find gardens at peak perfection in all seasons, they cannot be claimed as restorations. Today's visitors in search of gardens that are meant to represent the past with its own plants may not come in crowds by the busload, but they are steadily becoming more numerous and more critical.





One thing is certain about our early houses: they all had gardens as surely as they had roofs or wells. They had gardens because they had to. What we get today from our grocers, drugstores, and hardware stores the average householder in the early settlements had to provide from gardens. There even had to be enough material to spare for the poor or less thrifty. And needs were dire. With doctors not readily available and midwives enlisted only from those sufficiently talented and with apothecaries as itinerant as booksellers, all the ordinary human needs had to be met by housewives. They had to be skilled in distilling and in salve and pill making and knowledgeable about what had to be grown for insect repellents, skin treatment, deodorants, mouthwashes, pot scrubbing, and metal polishes (wild crab apples were long popularly recommended). Sore throats and intestinal worms were constant worries. The old idea that "equal tempers" must be maintained between cold and dry, hot and moist, demanded attention. Roots were described as hot (as with daisies); cucumbers were cooling. The doctrine of signatures was still prevalent and gave its name to many plants whose "vertues" were held to be self-evident through some sign on the plant itself, as in the liverwort (shape of

Above: The Whipple House—with its orchard, true to period, beside it—was moved across the river in Ipswich. *Left:* Every plant in the dooryard garden made a contribution to the health, housekeeping, or cooking of a 17th-century household. *Below:* Kept for sentimental reasons, the 'Harison's Yellow' rose, planted by designer Arthur Shurcliff, was only introduced in the 19th century. All other plants are known to have been grown in 17th-century New England.



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I tended while it hovered nigh,
Leaving me never alone."
—THOMAS HARDY

There's a very modern palette at work in the oak-panelled library of the late nineteenth century Manhattan brownstone shown here. (The key clues to its modernity are the slightly off-center hues and the unexpected harmonies.) Yet all the elements—fabrics, wallcovering and carpet—have their design roots deep in the past and, more specifically, deep in a past that has been carefully nurtured, preserved and maintained.

Fitzhugh Border from a mug in Virginia's Woodlawn Plantation; *Normandy Tea Chest* wallcovering from the Woodrow Wilson House



Preservationism—the knowledgeable and professional interest in maintaining the artifacts of America's historic past—is a relatively late-day phenomenon dating to the 1850's and Pamela Cunningham's determined efforts to "save" a rapidly deteriorating Mount Vernon. However, in recent years it has become an ever-more important and accelerating popular movement.



Oversize platter, a gift to President Wilson from the people of Normandy, basis for loveseat fabric, photo, opposite.

In 1949, The National Trust for Historic Preservation was chartered by Congress to encourage the public to participate in the preservation of America's history and culture. (Nationwide there are currently a total of seventeen historic properties owned by The Trust.) Schumacher's National Trust Collection features a wide variety of decorative accessories all based on details garnered from over a dozen of the celebrated Trust properties.

In the inviting library designed by C. Dudley Brown & Associates of Washington, D.C. (Brown has served as a design consultant for the Trust), the main star is the loveseat, its glazed *Brittany Faience* chintz patterned with flora and fauna borrowed from a platter in the Woodrow Wilson House Museum in Washington; from there, too, are the *Chinese Strie* of the ottoman and the draperies and the *Normandy Tea Chest* wallcovering. The *Fitzhugh Border* comes from a mug at Virginia's Woodlawn Plantation. *Filoli Tapestry,* on the pull-up chair and *Casa Amesti,* the table cover, both derive from period documents in the California mansions after which they are named.

The needlepoint rug features petit point floral motifs surrounding the medallion and is a prime example of Schumacher's painstaking collection of needlepoint from all over the world; a number of the exclusive designs are interpreted from such Trust house museums as Cliveden in Philadelphia and Decatur House in Washington.

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DOLL'S HOUSE: WASHINGTON DOLL'S HOUSE AND TOY MUSEUM / LAMP: PAUL HANSON CO., INC.



the leaf), birthwort (shape of the blossom), and lungwort (spots on the leaves).

In the 1940s, when Arthur A. Shurcliff came back to his summer home in Ipswich, Massachusetts, after designing the Governor's Palace Garden in Williamsburg, he kindly designed an appropriate seventeenth-century garden for the Ipswich Historical Society's 1640 Whipple House. It had been moved in 1927 from its original site in the center of downtown Ipswich to the other side of the river onto the South Village Green. He laid out six raised beds, ten feet square, separated by clam shell paths for a frontyard garden entered from the side of the house facing another Society property. The first two were planted as formal beds—solid periwinkle with a 'Harison's Yellow' rose in the center of each.

The other beds, which centered on the front door, were turned over to me, as chairman of the Ipswich Garden Club committee to re-create a seventeenth-century garden that would be "planted symmetrically with authentic material." When I asked for a book on the subject and was told there was none, I decided that I would make the work worthwhile by using only plant material for which I could find contemporary documentary evidence, starting as near the site as possible, and that I would write a book about it as I went along.

I did not realize then the pitfalls that lay ahead. For instance, I did not know that 'Harison's Yellow' rose was newly introduced at about the time it was crossing the country by covered wagon nearly two hundred years after the Whipple House was built. But I felt I had to leave these roses for sentiment. They are still there today, still wrong, but sentiment demands some concessions if they are openly made. I found that the lesser periwinkle (*Vinca minor*) had been deemed an aphrodisiac in the early herbals we know the settlers possessed, so I left some as a border and reserved the area between it and the roses for culinary and medicinal herbs. The four center beds I kept for plants of interest for special needs as gleaned from whatever sources became available.

I had been strangely encouraged when told by Kenneth Murdock, an authority on Cotton Mather and seventeenth-century American culture, that it was possible within one's lifetime to read all that had been written in and about the seventeenth century in New England. Even if one was looking only for plant and garden references and was a naturally fast reader, was it possible? I decided to start with sermons, of which the Ipswich Historical Society seemed to possess tons, and was even more encouraged to find no contemporary references to any plants except those in the Old Testament. Freed of sermons, I planned to start with the house and move out gradually.

John Winthrop Jr.'s seed list from the London grocer is the oldest bill for such items still in existence

Beginning in the house itself for clues to its original garden, we were fortunate to find a 1683 inventory that listed—among the family books and Bible—several bottles of "waters" and a "syrup" made from plants that must have been available in the garden. These were: five bottles of syrup of clove gillyflowers (used as the vehicle for doses of pure spirits), three each of rose water and strawberry water (used for complexions in a country where many were badly scarred by smallpox), two of mint water, and one of angelica.

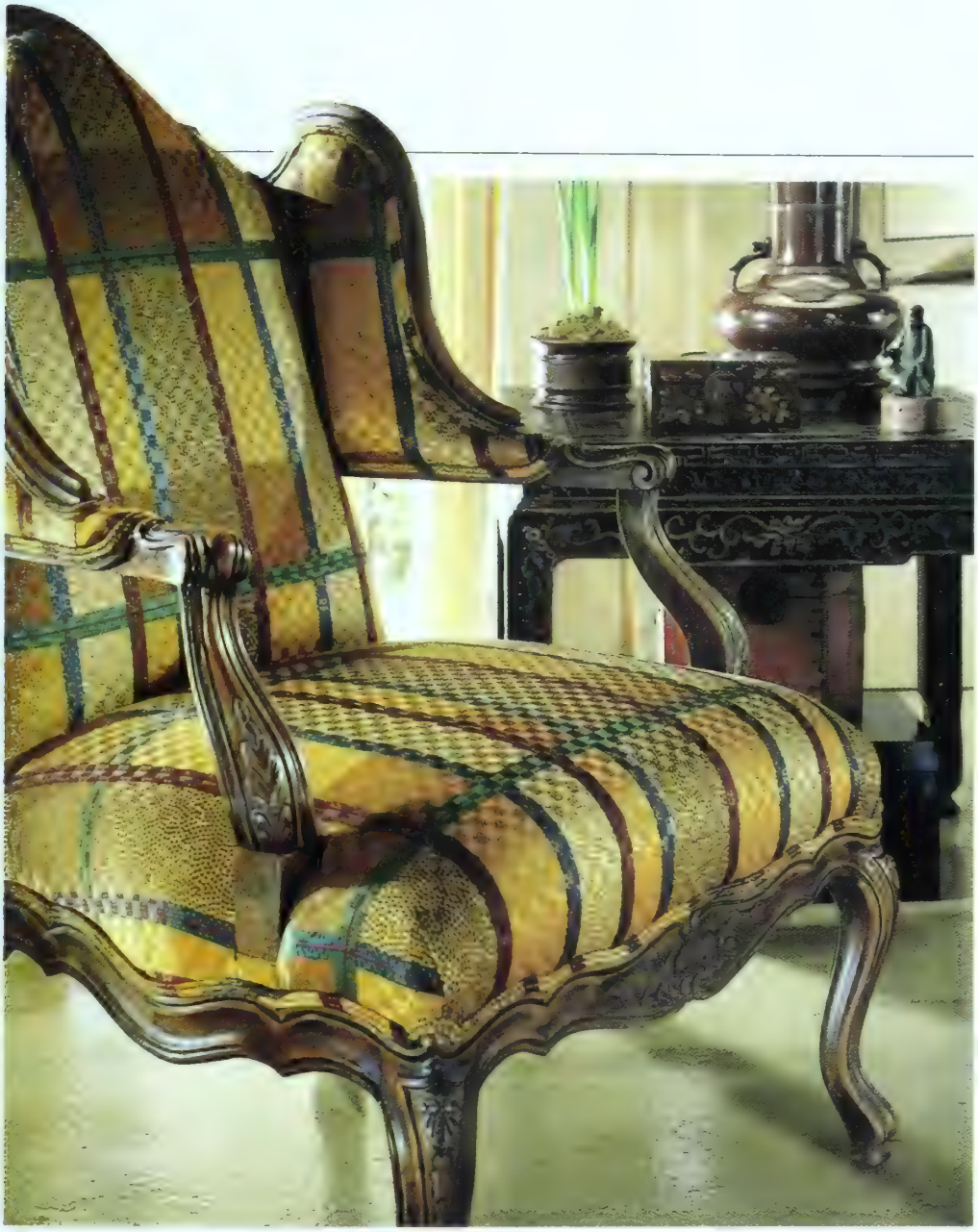
The inventory allows us to put in a border of strawberries, one of gillyflowers (clove pinks), a large plant of angelica, a plot of mint, and some apothecary roses (*Rosa gallica officinalis*). (It is interesting to note—in relation to remedies being deemed worthy of inclusion in an inventory—that the family Bible is valued at sixteen shillings. The bottles of rose, mint, and strawberry water are valued at about two shillings each, as is a bottle of port wine. The books besides the Bible are valued at a total of five pounds, eight shillings, and ninepence.)

We have more clues by moving no farther from our garden than the next town of Rowley. In 1682, the year before the inventory, Abraham How, the local storekeeper, wrote in his account book—upside down to avoid confusion—a letter about "good management under the distemper of the measels." It is a good letter, very long and full of warnings against cold drinks whereby the patient can "find death in the pot." If the patient has a cold, he should have a tea of balm and scabious. "If he be loose," a tea of sage or rosemary; if "gript," add pennyroyal (at the height of the disease, hyssop is preferable to scabious). For a cough, if licorice cannot be had, a tea of maidenhair, hyssop, or coltsfoot will do.

Apart from these garden fillers presenting themselves in writing within a five-mile radius of our raised beds, we can pursue further evidence of another sort for those plants assumed to be at hand in every seventeenth-century garden. Staying within our first radius, we can resort to fields, meadows, roadsides, and old cellar holes where what are now know as "escaped" wildflowers abound. Our field daisy, chicory, yarrow, mallow, Dame's violet, coltsfoot, Our-Lady's-bedstraw, bouncing Bet spill over the ground. When we can establish that they were brought over and when we find out the probable reasons for their being brought, we can put them on trial in our garden until fully documented—as they can be in most cases.

Pursuing our first trail of written evidence by moving farther from the surrounds of our garden, we find early aids in a letter written by Governor John Endecott to Governor John Winthrop, whose wife was having a "mother-fit" (hysterics). Endecott sympathizes with his fellow governor: these things are sent to try us. He sends vials of syrup of violets, spirits of mints, and a nurse with her own unicorn's horn and bezoar stones. He recommends tobacco stuffed up the nose to bring on sneezing (which puts a stop to

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hysterics) and mentions mugwort (a remedy for worms) and "organie."

Our venturing a half day's ride from our garden has brought us to the two leading gardeners of the day—Governor Endecott on his estate, Orchards, and Governor Winthrop in Boston on his island, Governor's Garden. Mistress Winthrop, who was ill, is the woman young John Winthrop Jr., her stepson, was asked to bring over in 1631 with a good supply of the conserve of red roses, so helpful in long voyages. By the same voyage arrived our most valuable source of New England garden information—the seed list of the London grocer filling an order to be shipped to New England.

John Winthrop Jr.'s seed list from the London grocer is the oldest bill—the earliest cataloguing—for such items still in existence. It is a long list—56 different sorts of seeds. Leaving out those inappropriate for a housewife's garden—field crops like cabbages and carrots, parsnips and pumpkins—we find ourselves with the makings of a handsome garden, chiefly of useful plants but all capable of luxuriant growth and pretty blooms. Among these are recorded our earliest dates for introducing the very plants we can find "escaped" and "naturalized" in our fields and meadows and roadsides today—tansy, chicory, the field daisy (maudlin), mallow, Dame's violets, coltsfoot, and so on. We have English garden favorites: wallflowers, hollyhocks, columbine, monkshood, and violets and useful plants like lettuce, basil, bugloss, lovage, and thyme.

And these are only seeds. From their letters we know the Winthrops came supplied with fruit scions and roots. They brought roses, yellow, white, and red, and were sent them by friends.

Since we are bent upon growing only what most likely would have been welcomed by the Whipples into their raised beds, we need hardly look further than what has been found in the first circuit of thirty miles from the door.

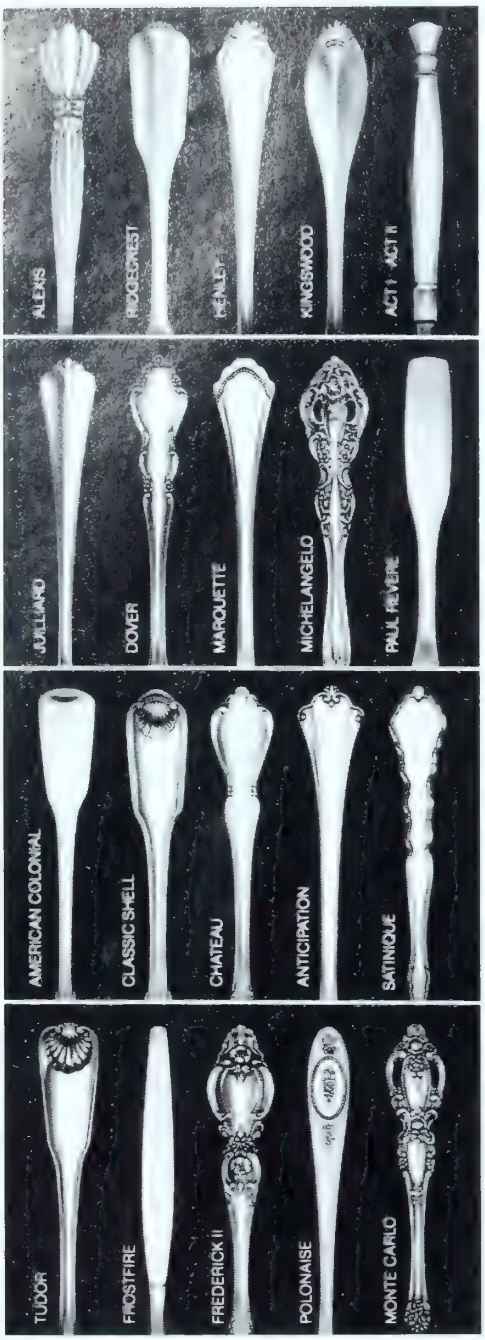
But we are tempted by other more exuberant characters than the Puritan settlers. Captain Lawrence Hammond on duty in Boston undertook in his journal advice on medicinal matters; the section titled "Physical Receipts" yielded us rue and sage, elecampane (now used for horses), betony, and mugwort. His ideas about application may dismay us, such as garlic in the ears with honey, which he also used to plaster headache remedies to the temple overnight, but his demands upon gardens are fair enough to follow.

And then we come to the fabulous John Josselyn from whose books *New-Englands Rarities Discovered* and *An Account of Two Voyages to New-England* we have our liveliest accounts of life in the growing colonies. He knew Ipswich—"store of Orchards and Gardens"—but he concentrated his botanizing on the coast of Maine around Falmouth, where he visited his brother for years.

Josselyn fancied himself in many roles and has left us a splendid account of the plants of the New England landscape and the settlers' gardens, all compared with their English equivalents as listed in Gerard's *Herbal* (Johnson's edition of 1633). From him we know lavender and rosemary had to be brought in in the winter. He is the man who called upon his hostess for syrup of clove gillyflowers in the emergency of a workman prostrated by heat while haying. He cured the man in a week on this alone with spirits added. But we add to this account—and to our garden's initial layout—his recipe for cooking eels: not, he admits, the "common way" of boiling them in half water, half wine. Josselyn fills the eel's body with nutmeg and cloves, sticks cloves into the sides "about an inch asunder," makes a wreath of the eel, and puts it into wine vinegar and water with the bottom of a penny white loaf and "these herbs following, Parsley, one handful, a little sweet Marjoram, Penniroyal, and Savory, a branch of Rosemary." When they are boiled, the eels are put into a warm chafing dish, yeast and lemon juice are added to the broth, and they are served with lemon—Barbados was nearer then than today.

So we count upon garnishes from our garden. And one more reference fixes the commonest herbs there for us. Our poetess Anne Bradstreet, in a wishful couplet protesting her preference for a pen over a needle—"Men have precedency and still excell"—"asks no bays" for herself, only a "Thyme or Parsley wreath."

So into our seventeenth-century garden . . . □



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THE ENGLISH CHANNEL

Some of the best of Britain passes through New York's Kentshire Galleries

By Elaine Greene

One of the characteristics of a large and vital city like New York is the evolution of neighborhoods: slaughterhouse district into United Nations headquarters, crumbling factory zone into chic apartment and gallery center. In contrast, Greenwich Village, the city's most famous neighborhood and a magnet for tourists of all nationalities, has a relatively stable building stock and population, but big changes have occurred there recently in the local business life. During the past decade or so, the Village has become a magnet of another sort, drawing decorators and their clients who come in search of antique furnishings.

On Hudson Street, shops for the inexpensive, the funky, and the kitschy are found clustered together in the usual New York way. Bleecker Street, a block to the east, offers moderately priced objects with a strong country French emphasis. From 10th to 12th Streets in the vicinity of Broadway are gathered dealers in important, fine, rare, expensive, mostly English furnishings from the William and Mary style through the Classical Revival.

Prominent in the latter group, Kentshire Galleries at 37 East 12th Street has a visitors register that can be viewed as the Who's Who of American decorators. One of them, Mario Buatta, says he considers Kentshire his "English antiques department store—all they need to add is an escalator." One-stop shopping is the stated aim of owners Fredric Imberman and Robert Israel, who describe their stock as "everything that might be needed by a decorator working in the English mode in a quantity sufficient to offer a true choice." At any one moment at Kentshire you can see about fifteen secretaries ranging in period from William and Mary through the Georges and from $25,000 to $250,000 in price; nine or ten perfect little circa-1690 bun-footed chests of drawers in oyster walnut veneer; and perhaps thirty sets of from eight to eighteen dining chairs, some eighteenth- and early-nineteenth-century examples and some excellent late-nineteenth-century copies of earlier pieces.





Fred Imberman explains the latter: "We devote one of our six gallery floors to such copies, which are at least a hundred years old. We must if we are to serve the trade. No one can do a large traditional project from scratch today without resorting to some of these well-patinated reproductions."

For some decorating jobs, such as a weekend cottage or a city guest room, designers find what they need on another special Kentshire floor, the one that resembles the big crowded antiques barn of a shopper's dreams. Here are the painted and bamboo pieces, the Victorian oddities, the garden seats and urns, the extensive collection of children's chairs (once the subject of a special public exhibition at the gallery, as was a group of Anglo-Indian pieces), the comfy, the endearingly decorative.

Accessories are another part of the everything a decorator might want, and this winter Kentshire made it easier to view and choose them. Rounding up and adding to all the enamel boxes, inkwells, tortoiseshell-and-ivory objects, Staffordshire dogs, brass and silver frames, accessories relating to wine, whis-

MARK JENKINSON

Left: Reflected in two of their gloriously time-worn mirrors are Ellen and Robert Israel at left, Fredric and Marcie Imberman at right. *Above:* Jewelry collection includes a Victorian bow brooch, Georgian gem-set peacock, Art Deco earrings.



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key, and tobacco use, games, paisley shawls, tapestry pillows, and other small enticements that had been scattered through the building, Kentshire reorganized the third floor into the Collector's Gallery. Here the 3,000-square-foot open loft space has been divided into display areas that resemble rooms in a house—a house in England of course—made out of eighteenth-century paneling and door frames and other architectural elements collected abroad and shipped here to be adjusted for the space by Kentshire cabinetmakers.

The redesign of the third floor was also inspired by the desire of Marcie Imberman and Ellen Israel, wives of the owners and principals in the firm themselves, to bring a slowly growing antique jewelry business out of the safe and into display cases. This division of Kentshire grew out of an interest the women developed while accompanying their husbands on buying trips to Britain. Ellen Israel, once a teacher, had been selling jewelry to the gallery customers in an informal manner until the new third floor was completed. By this time, her sister-in-law, Marcie Imberman, had quit her book-publishing job and joined in the endeavor. The women see customers by appointment as before, but they no longer have to rummage through piles of little leather boxes to show their best wares. The jewelry tends to be, on average, about a hundred years younger than the furniture here: Victorian and Edwardian pieces make up the bulk of the stock.

The creation of the Collector's Gallery at Kentshire was step three in the gradual upscaling of a once-modest business. Step two had been the move, eleven years ago, from a rented double storefront to their own 30,000-square-foot loft building, which yielded six gallery floors plus generous space for storage, shipping, handling, and an in-house restoration shop. Step two gave them space for the kind of display Kentshire has become known for. Decorator Pauline Feldman talks about the "incredible atmosphere" on the three floors devoted to the finest antiques. "It reminds me of an art gallery. You can really show a client how a piece will look in their home because of the beautiful groupings they make and because of the good lighting and the spaces between the pieces."

It was step one in Kentshire's metamorphosis that was the most important, and the story begins with the United States Silver Company, a Greenwich Village wholesale establishment founded in 1940 by Benson Imberman, father of Fred Imberman and Ellen Israel. The brother and sister remember visiting their father's store when it was part of a wholesale and auction center for commercial furniture with trucks lining the streets and merchandise stacked to the ceilings of the warehouses. For about thirty years the United States Silver Company imported antique silver, silverplate, porcelain, and conventional middle-range furniture from England, selling it to small antiques shops that lacked their own buying and shipping facilities.





Top: The interior of a c.-1690 burr-elm bureau-bookcase is stained to resemble tortoiseshell. *Above:* Shown on the eclectic sixth floor are bamboo armchair, English garden urn, Victorian bobbin-turned armchair covered with Persian carpet.

In 1969, Fred Imberman decided that he wasn't cut out to do the social work he had trained for, and his new brother-in-law, Bob Israel, was having similar doubts about his career in advertising. Benson Imberman needed help at work and the two young men joined him. They were apprentices at first, taking their maiden buying trips with father Imberman, learning how to go out on their own. (Their mentor, though retired, still takes a great interest in the firm and still travels to England.) Beyond the pedestrian segment of the antiques field the firm had concentrated on, the younger men were seeing pieces that were works of art. Their imaginations were caught and they decided, with Benson Imberman's blessing, to go after a new stock of high-style objects and a new clientele of high-style decorators.

"We let our taste lead us," Bob Israel says. His brother-in-law adds, "Merchandising and marketing and finance are important aspects of what we do, but a love of objects is the foundation." The new freedom led Kentshire into taking chances, led them into overstated styles like Regency before the decorating establishment caught up. Although they maintain a big selection of unalarming, beautiful objects that the average wealthy client wants, there is always a reliable trove of the unusual—because the men enjoy buying it and because they have become known for it. "That an object is English is not enough," they say. "Brown wood is not enough—it has to have good patination. We are always in the market for painted and faux finishes, early walnut, objects in pairs. We love satinwood; we love unconventional cabinets. We'll drive three and a half hours in the English rain to see a single bureau-bookcase that sounds interesting."

Customers like designer Mark Hampton, a frequent visitor to Kentshire, appreciate the trouble taken. "You have to keep going because the stuff keeps pouring in. It is always a pleasure to see the good and varied things they find," he says. □

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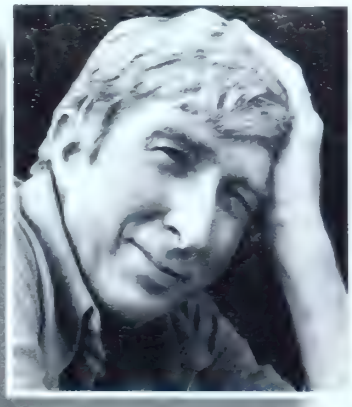
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THE YEAR
1985



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Syrie Maugham's 1920s drawing room in London.

THE QUALITY OF WHITE

A rich range of decorative effects can be achieved with no color at all

By Mark Hampton

For something most people do not count as a color, white and all the tones of off-white provide a variety of rich decorative effects that no bona fide pigmented hue does. Historically there have been many beautiful white-washed rooms in peasant cottages and great palaces, but they were rooms where whiteness was a background. In modern times, white along with the pale neutral range that I call no-color has developed into a real point of view which still exists as a bold, stylish way to decorate a room and in fact seems to be gaining in popularity after a few years of being eclipsed by the nostalgia for lush colorful fin de siècle decorating.

I don't know when the first intentionally designed no-color room appeared. It would be interesting to know whether it evolved or was the result of someone's brainstorm. It could certainly be argued that after the nineteenth century, color-free interiors were bound to appear. Looking at many photographs and watercolors from a hundred years ago, one has the feeling that white had almost ceased to exist, and with the whiteness went all the air as well. Often upon entering shops that specialize in old upholstered furniture, I feel an intense need to escape from the dusty atmosphere all that decaying velour and fringe creates. The early no-color designers must have felt the same way, and although we now know that any style of decoration can be interpreted in a no-color way, ninety years ago the idea seemed very modern. Charles Rennie Mackintosh, that pivotal figure in the history of modern design, created rooms in

MARK HAMPTON



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Scotland which changed the way architects and designers have looked at things ever since. From Vienna to Chicago, his influence was tremendous. Josef Hoffmann and Frank Lloyd Wright might not have existed as we know them had it not been for Mackintosh. In contrast to rooms that were formal, rich, and dark, Mackintosh's interiors were informal, rather cottagey, and light. This quality of lightness extended to the actual construction of the rooms and everything in them, ruling out the use of the gilding and heavy carving so prevalent then.

Another seminal influence at the time—and one who had a similar effect as that of Mackintosh—was James McNeill Whistler. All you have to do is glance at one of Whistler's monochromatic portraits with hints of Japonesque decoration in the background and you can immediately grasp his extraordinary gift for style and atmosphere. When compared with other portraits of the same period, his are simply revolutionary. In a very good essay on modern interior design by Edgar Kaufmann Jr., published in 1953 by the Museum of Modern Art, Whistler's influence on the decorative arts is given enormous emphasis and the argument is very convincing.

By the 1920s, there were full-fledged examples of creamy white rooms that have become landmarks in the history of interior decoration. One of the most famous, pictured in the illustration, was the London drawing room Syrie Maugham created for herself in the late twenties. Everything in the room was pale and creamy except for the piano, which was hidden by a low parchment-covered screen. Behind it stood another screen made up of thirty-odd six-inch-wide mirror panels framed with chromium-plated metal. Can you imagine making a screen like that today? Mrs. Maugham's big boxy sofas were slipcovered in off-white and trimmed with coarse fringe. The geometric carpet was by Marion Dorn, the brilliant carpet designer who at the end of her career worked in this country. The low lacquered coffee table was the sort that we associate with Jean Michel Frank. The flowers were off-white as always. The effect that this room must have had on visitors stumbling in from the soot of London before coal fires were banned was no doubt fantastic. With it an entire school of interior decoration was born.

One must not forget Paris. Jean Michel Frank was a more serious influence than Mrs. Maugham. His furniture designs are still very much a part of present-day decoration. The objects he commissioned from Diego Giacometti are more sought after and valuable than ever. He was a near genius, and the room he created at 11, place des États-Unis in Paris for the vicomte and vicomtesse de Noailles in the late twenties was another one of those landmarks of design which gain in beauty and appeal as time goes by. The walls of this high-ceilinged room were covered in large panels of parchment. The enormous double doors were sheathed in bronze and allowed to darken. All of the upholstered furniture was again huge and boxy and off-white. The curtains were of the same tone and plain. It was certainly very stylized. When I saw it in 1970, forty years after its creation, this remarkable room was still an exciting and beautiful example of decoration, in spite of time and change. The blank walls had become covered with great French paintings by twentieth-century masters. Books and objects crowded tables that were originally bare. The furniture was slipcovered with funny-looking white cotton slipcovers. In short, everything that goes on in a house over a period of time and often ruins its decorative effect went on in this bold room without destroying its boldness. Colored paints and textiles *would* have destroyed it.

The exciting and extravagant rooms I've just described could perhaps be considered as just so much passé glamour—fine for Jean Harlow but not pertinent today. That isn't the point, although the dramatic aspect is definitely a strong one. The no-color philosophy is applicable in a broad range of decorating and can be practiced in widely divergent situations.

Take, for instance, two rooms creat-



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ed by Albert Hadley nearly twenty years apart, one in a barn in Maine and the other in a splendid New York apartment. The barn room had all the characteristics that make you want to turn every pretty old barn into a house. There were old rough beams and great open spaces. A tall window, reminiscent of an artist's studio (another fantasy mood I always love), provided light and a broad view over fields and woods, the sort of view barns are supposed to have. The floors, walls, and ceiling were different tones and textures of white and off-white. The upholstered furniture was covered in a pale cotton twill that was neither beige nor cream. A beautifully carved trophy of a stag's head with real antlers was whitewashed and hung over the mantel. A few pieces of furniture were painted white and others were left in natural straw or bamboo. Some fur pillows blended in with the naturalness of the accents. There were witty references to every possible twentieth-century phase of interior design. Living together in contented harmony were a 1950s standing lamp in chrome and steel, a Louis XVI bench covered in Dutch East Indies batik, Lucite tables, angular sofas like Syrie Maugham's and Jean Michel Frank's, Regency bamboo, and even a calfskin rug. The aim was not to achieve a flashy opulence with calla lilies in goldfish bowls. It was to create a summery mood of carefree simplicity, lightness, and comfort in addition to an amusing stylishness combining a broad collection of furniture and objects which would be equally inviting in the spring and fall. The vehicle for this ambitious objective was the no-color scheme.

The goal in the handsome Park Avenue apartment was entirely different. Working with a certain amount of formality, a beautiful collection of old master drawings, and a broad range of very special eighteenth-century furniture, Albert Hadley utilized a no-color scheme to dispel the richness inherent in the possessions of the owner, substituting a softness and comfort more appropriate to our age without sacrificing any of the beauty that we all long for. The drawings by Van Dyck and Rubens look marvelous, the Louis XVI chairs in their original needlework are divine, and the golden Regency serpents wriggling up the legs of their console are more frightening than ever. All this complexity is displayed to perfection against a palomino background.

A further effect of this sort of pale luxury is the way in which it frames the views out the windows. The changes in light and color take on the clarity of an Ansel Adams photograph. The way off-white monochrome decorating provides a perfect foil for surrounding terraces and gardens is well illustrated by an enchanting Barbados house designed by the late scenic designer-turned-architect Oliver Messel. Its present charm is due both to the great taste and style of its owner and to Bunny Williams, who, under the tutelage of Albert Hadley and his partner, Sister Parish, has grasped the effectiveness of using a no-color scheme in direct juxtaposition to a ravishing tropical garden by the sea. In this case, however, the monochromatic scheme is not confined to a room or two. The entire house is decorated in varying shades of cream and off-white, with a constant repetition of an accent color that ranges from face powder to peachy pink. In the evening as the sun sets over the Caribbean, the distinction between ivory and peach becomes so blurred that it is nearly impossible to tell what color anything actually is. The orchids and lilies from the garden become the lightest, brightest tones in the rooms. Needless to say, the atmosphere is wonderful: peace and quiet without dullness.

The extraordinary aspect of these rooms is that they are all so different. Eschewing color doesn't reduce rooms to a state of sameness. On the contrary, it allows a host of elements to come into play. As a background for art and antiques, a no-color scheme is both subtle and dramatic. For a lover of gardens and landscape views, it provides a noninterfering middle ground through which the details of the outdoors are seen with special clarity. In the hectic and dirty confusion of city life, it offers a surprise combination of extravagant luxury and quietude. Architectural details, both modern and traditional, stand out in marvelous relief against an airy color-free backdrop. And if there's a family controversy over which colors to use, why not settle it by opting for no color at all. It would be a lot more satisfactory than tossing a coin and ending up with a color you don't like. □

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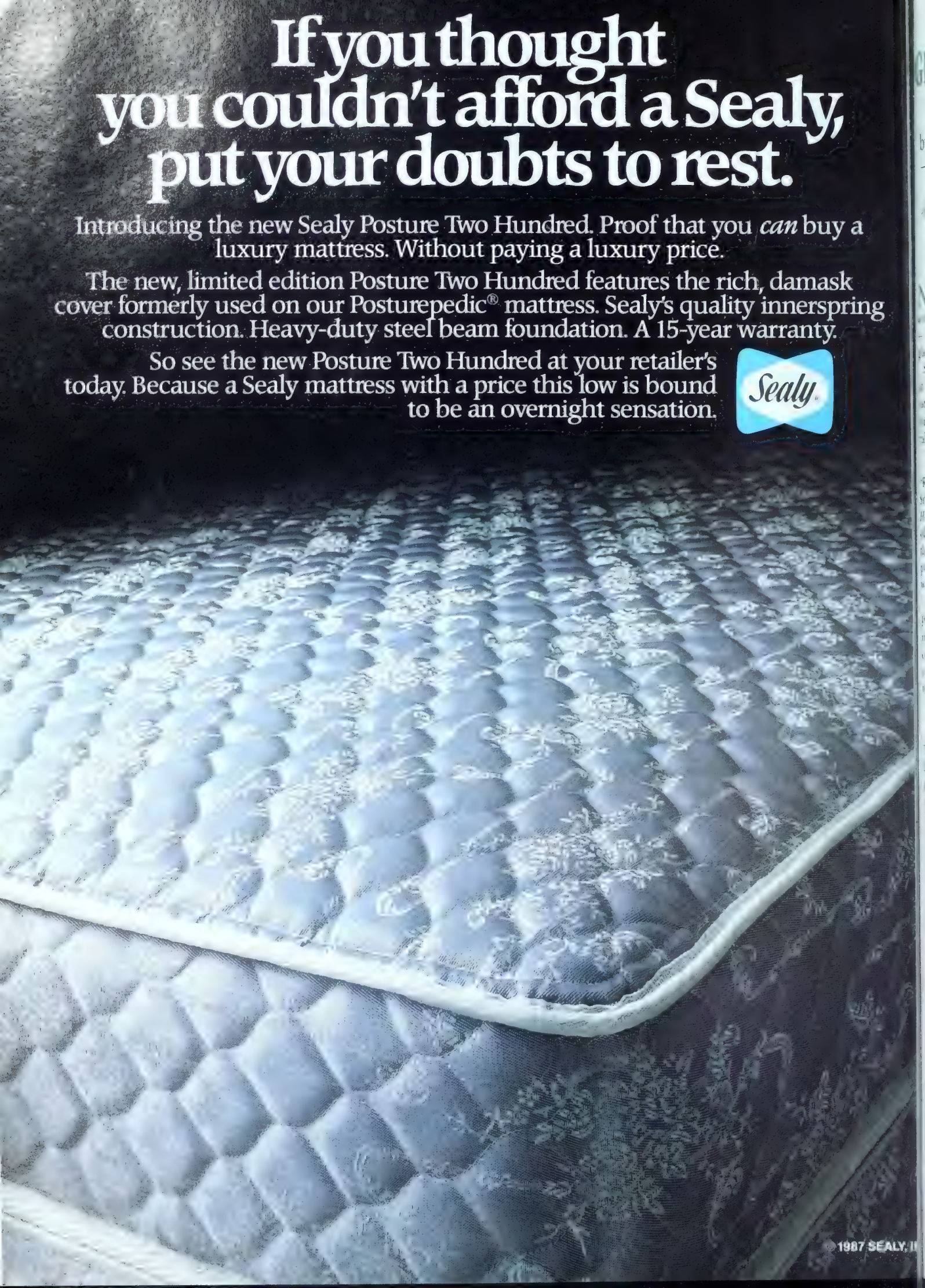
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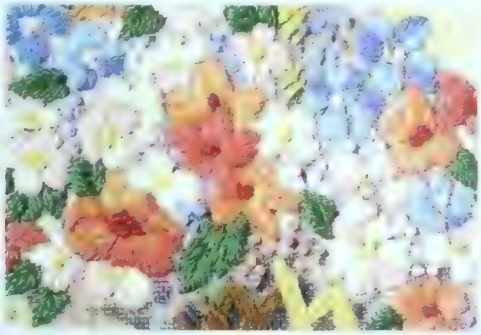
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OUR REGENCY RENTAL

How to spend the summer in Ireland

By Alan Emmet



I've a shooting box in Scotland,
I've a château in Touraine,
I've a silly little chalet
In the Interlaken Valley,
I've a hacienda in Spain,
I've a private fjord in Norway,
I've a villa close to Rome,
And in traveling
It's really quite a comfort to know
That you're never far from home!
—COLE PORTER

For an extended family group—my family—a rented house in Ireland provided that comforting home for three weeks in July.

Specialized agencies and occasional ads in magazines offer tantalizing castles and villas to let. We found ours through the Irish Tourist Board, which has an office in New York as well as in almost every Irish town of any size. We pored over the fat bundle of literature netted by a letter to the tourist office in Cork. "Self-catering accommodations"—each possibility illustrated by a fuzzy inch-square black-and-white snapshot and described in a few lines of telegraphic prose—filled page after page. We wanted to be near the southern coast, and we needed plenty of room. The choice was easy. We wrote to London to the owners of "Regency house/2 hectares parkland, on sea loch" with an eighteenth-century gate lodge "tastefully modernized." Within the month we had a letter telling us that the house and lodge would be temporarily ours.

After a night flight from Boston, nearly all given over to gentle Aer Lingus hospitality instead of sleep, even the fabled green Irish hills and twisting flower-lined roads could scarcely keep us awake on the five-hour drive south from Shannon.

We were welcomed with tea by Mrs. Burke, the caretaker, her daughter Maureen, and her niece Sheila O'Sullivan. Maureen and Sheila were to cook for us. Months before, when we had written our landlady that we would like to find a cook, she suggested we advertise in London, as Irish cooking might not suit us. This proposal proved to be as absurd as it sounded. We knew from previous experience that Irish food is one of the special pleasures of Ireland. Times are very hard there at present, jobs are scarce, and Maureen, a registered nurse who had been laid off, and Sheila, who is still in school, were quite







Top left: Alan Emmet with gunnera at Rossdohan, Co. Kerry. *Top to bottom:* The Emmet clan in residence; roofless temple, Ilnacullin, Co. Cork; Bantry House; view from Longueville House near Mallow; Drombeg stone circle.

CAROLINE EMMET HEALD

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pleased to help us for three weeks. Starting with our first tea, they plied us four times a day with good food. We had fresh brown soda bread, bacon rashers, and black pudding (a sausage) for breakfast, lettuce and British Queen potatoes from Mrs. Burke's garden, a freshly caught salmon, roast lamb and lamb stew, endless pots of tea, and pitchers of high-cholesterol milk from Mr. Burke's Friesian cows. The jug of cream for our raspberries appeared with a spoon in it. By the time we decided we should summon up the willpower to withstand these temptations, it seemed near enough to the end of our stay not to bother.

The round-topped windows of the house looked out across a tidal lough toward steep, partly wooded hills. A crumbling, ivy-covered castle on an islet almost hid the rushing narrow outlet to the Atlantic. The Burkes' cattle, confined by walls and wire, grazed all around us. We searched out places to scramble over so we might explore the high, rocky pastures above the house.

Our little demesne spoke of long-gone days of greater glory. On the daisy-dappled lawn an outsize marble mermaid, upholding a scallop shell like a well-trained cocktail waitress with her tray, presided over a dry fountain basin. A dark tunnel of rhododendron led toward the lakeshore. The rose garden was reduced to one leggy white rose bush. Overgrown clumps of agapanthus gradually revealed flowers that matched the patches of blue in the sky.

Behind the house was a complex of abandoned stone farm buildings, deep in nettles and creepers, and a huge walled kitchen garden, its venerable green door secured perhaps forever by a rusty lock. Above the ten-foot walls green globes of ripening fruit hung from the tops of forgotten apple trees.

The front hall typified the mixed décor of the house itself. An itinerant painter had recently given all the woodwork a faux-marble finish in shades of gray. The parquet had been battered by boots (or perhaps hooves?) before ours, and the carpets had faded to match the mud we tried not to track in. In the sitting room, flowery Laura Ashley chintzes hung behind overstuffed sofas of olive drab velvet whose squishy cushions spat feathers when sat on. One bookshelf held the entire 1966 run of *Country Life*. The canopied four-poster in the master bedroom had the best view of all. The plumbing was erratic; the bathrooms were spacious. It was the perfect house for us.

What with comings and goings, our family party altered from week to week. For a few memorable days our number reached a high of thirteen. Daytimes we often scattered for exploring or fishing, windsurfing or watercolor painting, according to inclination and the weather. Dinnertime and a wood fire in the hearth brought us back together. One night a bat flew out of the cavernous back room where the Ping-Pong table was, temporarily shattering the domestic idyll.





Top: Front view of Bantry House, Co. Cork. *Above:* Formal pool and pavilion at Ilnacullin near Glengarriff.

A leading member of our group was Diana, who reached the age of three months during the trip. The antique crib in the nursery seemed vast; her own 26-inch Hartmann suitcase made a cozier bed. If we had not had a home base, traveling with Diana would have been different. Not that she didn't accompany us on most excursions. One day, while we were lunching on nettle soup (surprisingly good) and smoked salmon at a pleasant bar-restaurant, Diana dozed off on a sofa beside our table. As the place filled up, two men sat down opposite her. Oh, no, they didn't mind at all, they said, "as long as she'll pay."

The summer days were so long that even after dinner we could row on the lake or walk through heather and along tiny roads where tall fuchsia hedges almost met overhead. Irish cows apparently get up later than American ones, so going occasionally to the Burkes' farm for morning milking did not require an alarm clock, and the view of the Atlantic was worth it. Paddy Burke told us they used to see the ocean liners going past at night, "all lit up like a city."

By car we explored the rocky headlands, sandy inlets, and fishing villages along the County Cork coast. One day we drove to Castletownshend, where the road through the village pitches steeply straight to the harbor, bending just enough to avoid one majestic tree. The fanlighted doorways of Georgian houses open right onto the street. Up another hill we climbed past pale pink fuchsias, fragrant mock oranges, tropical cordyline palms, and dark Irish yews to the churchyard of St. Barrahane's where we found the graves of Somerville and Ross, two cousins who wrote *Some Experiences of an Irish R.M.* (1899) and other novels set in this part of the country.

Signs all over the county announced the annual agricultural show in the nearby market town of Skibbereen, where we did our errands. On the day of the show we parked in a field and passed the afternoon admiring gleaming horses and immaculate cattle, to say nothing of dogs. The dogs in the

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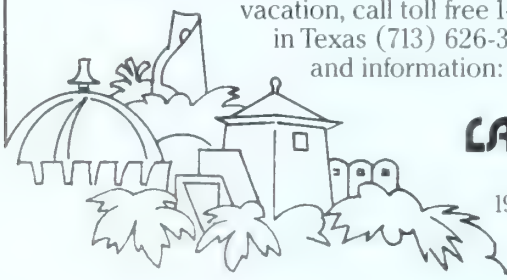
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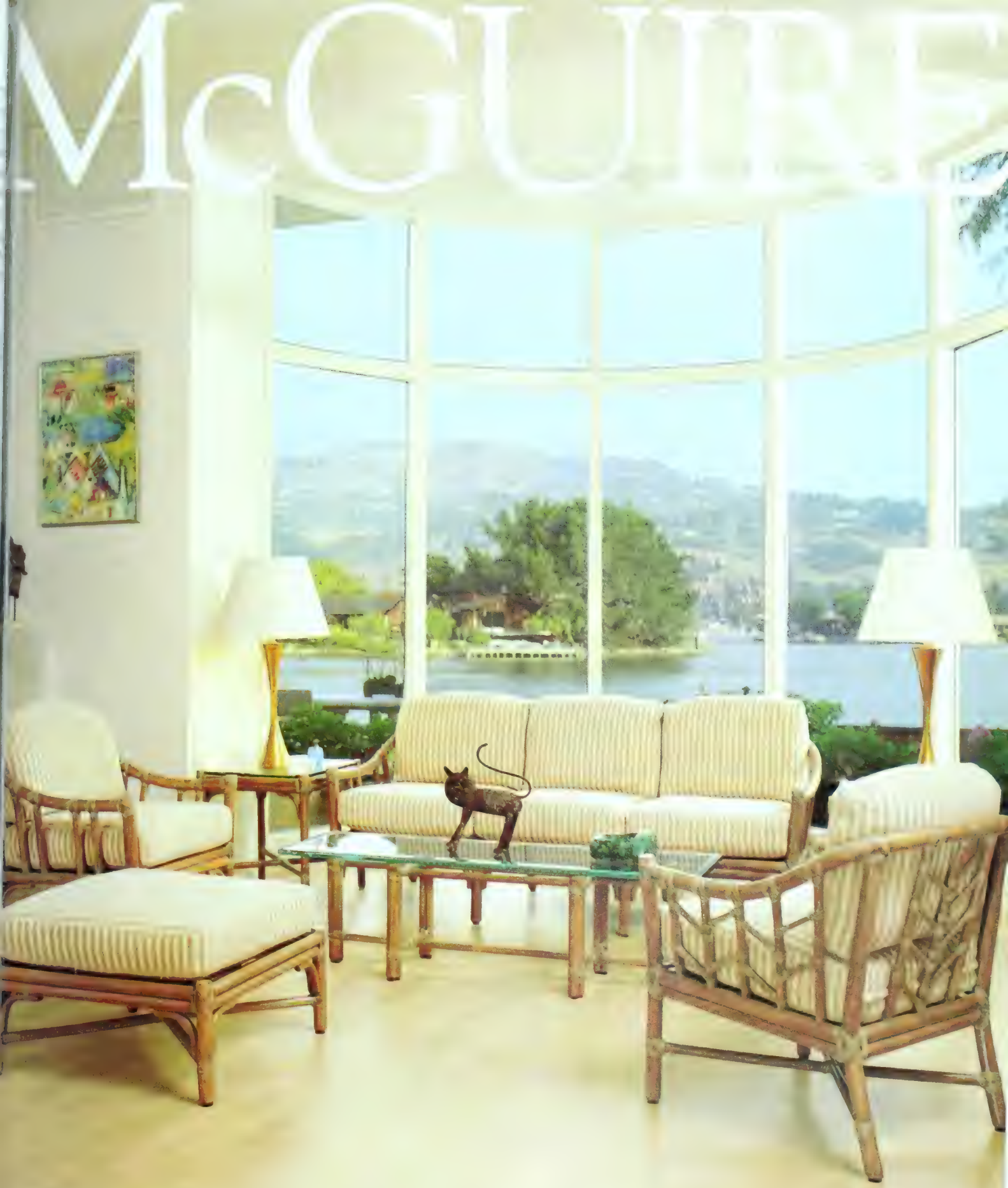
"very small, miscellaneous class" were no more miscellaneous than their handlers. Two well-dressed judges, flushed with intensity, took a long time before deciding to award the largest trophy to number 42, a fluffy brown terrier type. Behind the tea tent a platform was set up for the Irish dancing competition. Starting off with the "under-six jig class," groups of little girls in embroidered dresses and capes performed to the accompaniment of an accordion. Some were tight-lipped and tense, while others, light on their black-slippered feet, hair bows bouncing, smiled for the love of it.

We had read a lot and planned a bit in preparation for our trip. Our traveling library included a 1949 *Blue Guide*. There are fewer passenger trains and bicycles now, and cars have multiplied since 1949, but most of what we were looking for has not changed. Certainly not Drombeg stone circle, a pre-Christian Stonehenge-like ring of upright stones, which had for centuries poked more or less unremarked out of a farmer's field. Although the partially excavated site is now a national monument, the muddy track we followed through dense fog and the sound of curlews and running water seemed to lead us back in time. When we suddenly came upon them, the ancient gray stones—wreathed in mist and hauntingly beautiful—were as tall as we were.

I stopped by one day to see Imelda Regan in the local tourist office in Skibbereen. She was prepared to offer maps, bus schedules, or—with a sparkle in her eye—what seemed like tips to a trusted friend on her own favorite little-known restaurants and seldom-visited coastal promontories. She supplied beguiling printed guides to historic castles and gardens open to visitors, or to country houses now run as inns. We made several brief forays from our home base to places we had read or heard about. One place we were drawn to for an overnight stay was Longueville House.

Michael O'Callaghan and his wife, Jane, manage Longueville, his 1720 ancestral home near Mallow, as an inn that is the stuff of dreams. There is no sign at the gate lodge. One simply follows the curving drive until, in approved eighteenth-century landscape style, the great house is suddenly revealed in a setting of pastoral simplic-

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ity. The view over the Blackwater River valley is quintessentially Irish: a herd of cows and one bay horse in green pastures, great oaks, singly and in clumps, a giant copper beech, and—across the river—hills, fields, and the tall stark ruin of a castle. Tea and, later, drinks by the fire in the drawing room were followed by dinner in a nineteenth-century conservatory, which still has its filigree of ironwork on the glass roof. Scallops from Kerry in a pale green puree of spinach were accompanied by Château Longueville white, the only Irish wine, according to Michael O'Callaghan. After an airy chocolate roulade, we explored the garden-vineyard in the long twilight. This corner of Longueville seemed more like Italy: flower borders against the walls, a tiered wellhead, a leering statue of Bacchus, and grapes on wires.

Near enough to Longueville for a half day's outing is a remarkable garden called Annes Grove. Southwest Ireland is noted for several extensive pseudo-wild gardens of exotic plants. Annes Grove is one of these. It is now open to visitors. We, however, saw no one but a young boy cutting grass.

For a minuscule fee one can wander past the tall Georgian house to a walled garden where familiar flowers are three times the size of their North American siblings. Steps through dark woods descend to the astonishing water garden for which Annes Grove is famous. An arching Monet-like bridge crosses the river that twists and rushes among bold clumps of iris, astilbe, daylilies, and exotic foliage plants; water lilies float in the quiet backwaters.

Another day we drove north from our rented house over a steep mountain range to the private island garden of Rossdohan in Kenmare Bay. Here Samuel Heard, an officer retired from the Indian army, began a hundred years ago to transform a barren, windswept reef into a horticultural paradise. The mild moist climate encouraged Heard to collect trees and shrubs from the corners of the earth, as if to see what might happen. What did happen is a dripping green jungle that the Douanier Rousseau might have painted. Following the mossy steps that drop from the ruins of the great house, we wandered deep into the silent gloom. Tree ferns arched above us, brushing our faces. Giant bowllike leaves of gunnera tipped water as we passed. Half-expecting to spy a giant Mesozoic reptile, we whispered and walked softly among rocks green with moss and lichens and the tall red-barked or peeling trunks of alien trees. Emerging eventually from the jungle, I spied beside a tiny plant a tag, which read, "Seed collected in Tasmania, 1981." So Heard's successors are still at it.

We visited another island garden—Ilnacullin near Glengarriff—which was begun in 1910 by Annan Bryce and his designer, Harold Peto. Now open to the public, Ilnacullin is managed with great dignity and maintained to perfection by the National Parks and Monuments Service. Inspired by the seaside villas of ancient Rome, Ilnacullin combines formal pavilions and pools with wildly exotic shrubs and trees. High above the sea, a roofless temple framing views of blue mountain peaks inspires contemplation if not Virgilian eclogues.

Bantry House was the object of another of our expeditions. Built about 1700 at the head of Bantry Bay, this great house escaped being burned during the troubles in the early 1920s because its owner had the wit and the noblesse oblige to turn it temporarily into a hospital. The present eighth-generation owners allow visitors to wander across the Savonnerie rugs in their leisurely inspection of French tapestries and furnishings from many countries in Europe. Hand-lettered signs identifying family members in their portraits make one feel personally introduced. The library—walled in red damask and partitioned by marble columns—is the only room that does *not* have a breathtaking view of the bay and the Caha Mountains.

Bantry House has the unexpected amenity of a pleasant tearoom in the old kitchen and also offers bed and breakfast. Many of the Irish houses and gardens to which strangers are admitted have made no particular concessions to tourists. Visitors are treated like guests, as we were at Riverstown House near Cork. Having heard and read of the eighteenth-century plasterwork done by the LaFrancini brothers at Riverstown, I anticipated the "stately home" formality of guides, postcards, and velvet ropes. Instead we were invited in by John Dooley, the owner, who showed us his house, told us about himself and the place, introduced us to Mrs. Dooley, and presented me with a rose in farewell.

The city of Cork itself is well worth a visit, if only to have a meal at the Arbutus Lodge Hotel, which has to be worth it since it is so difficult to get to. This is true even—or especially—when one has the smug overconfidence of having done it before. The approach cannot be rushed. We seemed to make a series of little dashes at it, only to be turned back almost to the point of beginning by one-way streets. On one memorable occasion we found ourselves hurtling up a narrow corkscrew of a track, praying that we didn't run out of gas, meet another car, or suddenly find that what we had supposed to be a road had simply evolved into a flight of steps. None of these horrors occurred, and the passage lasted but a minute or two, but we knew why the city of Cork calls itself the twin of San Francisco. We debouched almost upon the hotel where delicious food and perfect service in pleasantly old-fashioned surroundings make one feel quite happy to have arrived. From the terrace, over coffee, the view of a charming garden—the spires and chimneys of the city, with sunlight on the hills beyond, all veiled by the graceful branches of a weeping ash tree—is immensely pleasing.

Too soon we neared the end of our stay in the house, which had become like home. As our ranks thinned out, our chef Maureen began to sigh, "It's *so quiet,*" and to prepare ever-richer culinary treats for the last of us. We thought of all the little roads we had not taken, the antiquities we hadn't explored, the musical evenings we had missed. Worst of all, the day of our early morning departure was the day of the annual rowing regatta on the water just beyond our doorstep. Crews were coming from all over Ireland to battle it out on the half-mile course. We missed cheering for the home team. □



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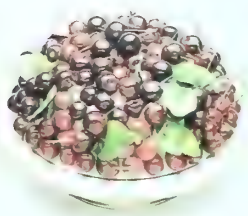
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CHOICE

What's new, what's noteworthy





DELECTABLE MAKE-BELIEVE

The 18th-century art of soft-paste porcelain is revived in handmade life-size confections from Robert Domergue in San Francisco; (415) 781-4034. The bowl containing an apple and pears, *above left,* is $1,800, the bowl of cherries, *above right,* $2,000.



EDIBLE ARCHITECTURE

The wedding cake shown with its maker, Cile Bellefleur Burbidge, *above,* was decorated with royal icing (egg white and confectioners sugar). Such a cake will have a four-figure price tag. Also a teacher, Burbidge began baking 26 years ago in a class at the YMCA. Her cakes have appeared in Tiffany's windows and at a chieftain's festivities in Nigeria. She is the author of *The Fine Art of Cake Decorating* (Van Nostrand Reinhold, $32.95). For information call her at (617) 774-3514.

FIRST AID FOR QUILTS is offered by America Hurrah, a New York shop run by pioneer folk-art authorities Joel and Kate Kopp, including the expert laundering of antique quilts and the more complicated restoration of quilts that are torn, worn, or stained. The Kopps use period textiles for repairs. Clients should bring quilts in person to the shop at 766 Madison Ave. For an appointment call (212) 535-1930.

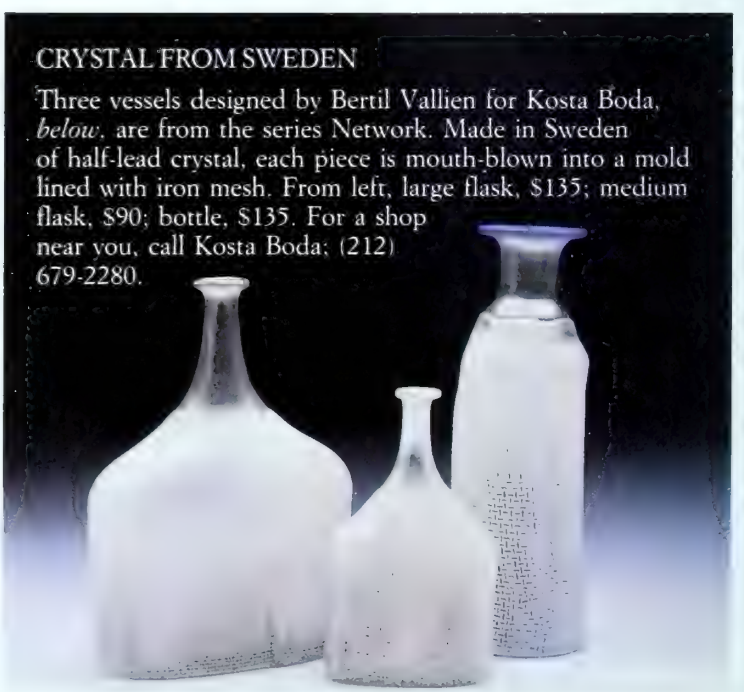


ESTATE DESIGNS REVIVED

Turn-of-the-century landscape architect Hans Heistad whose family is seen on his curved settee, *above,* designed English-style lawn furniture for a Maine estate. Today the tradition lives again at Weatherend Estate Furniture; (207) 596-6483. Copies of the settee (9½ feet long, $5,522) and table (3¼ by 2½ feet, $1,638) are part of the collection of locally made mahogany pieces sold in natural, white, or custom-colored finishes.

CRYSTAL FROM SWEDEN

Three vessels designed by Bertil Vallien for Kosta Boda, *below,* are from the series Network. Made in Sweden of half-lead crystal, each piece is mouth-blown into a mold lined with iron mesh. From left, large flask, $135; medium flask, $90; bottle, $135. For a shop near you, call Kosta Boda; (212) 679-2280.



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Chick Girl



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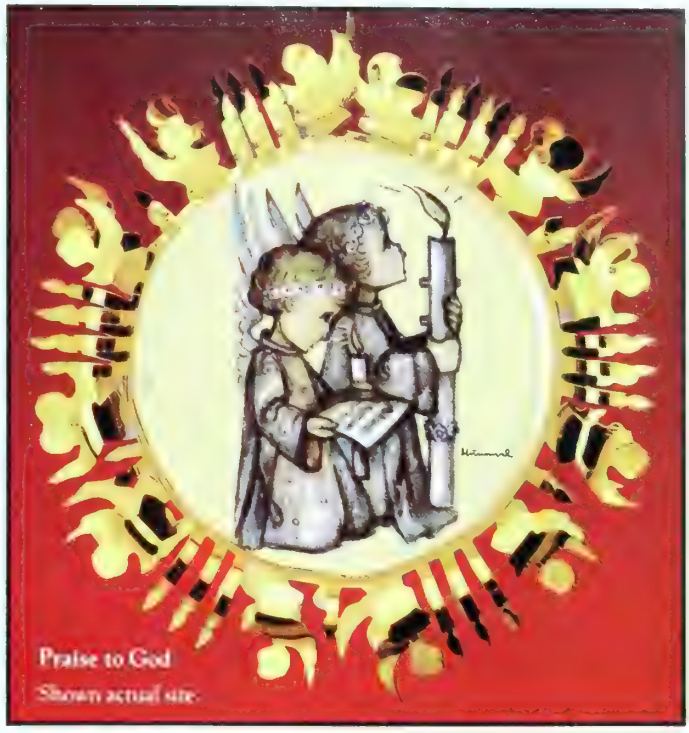
- 24kt gold finish frames.
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The beloved art of Sister Hummel so perfect for the holiday season!

The purpose of Sister Hum-nel's art is simple and sincere; to cheer the hearts of millions! Her children are famous around the world – universally cherished for their rosy cheeks, angelic smiles, and color-ful Old World costumes. There couldn't be a better way to heighten the happiness of the holidays.

The most popular Hummel paintings of all time!

The very convent in Bavaria where Sister Hummel created her beloved art participated in the development of this col-lection. The paintings are Hummel's most popular, most charming and enduring works. Now they can be displayed on your tree!

Each painting will be lithographed in full color and laminated for protection and beauty. The Hummel paint-ing will appear on both sides of the ornament, so you can see the artwork from any direction.

Unique filigreed frames finished in 24kt gold

Each ornament will be unique – no two are alike. Each frame will be individually filigreed to match the theme of the painting and enhance its beauty. Notice the delicate angels and candles on the frame of the *Praise to God* orna-ment and the fanciful baby chickens featured on the frame of the *Chick Girl* ornament.

Each individual frame will be finished with a full 2.5 micro-inches of gleaming 24kt gold. And each orna-ment will come with a graceful golden cord for trimming your tree.

Reserve today at a favorable price

As a subscriber to this ex-clusive collection, you will receive an ornament each month. Your original issue price of just $16.50 per orna-ment is guaranteed for all thirty-six ornaments in the collection, and you will be billed with each shipment or, you may charge each orna-ment, as shipped, to VISA or MasterCard.

Each ornament will be in-dividually hallmarked, dated and registered. In addition, a fascinating narrative about the Hummel painting will accompany each ornament. An attractive chest will also be furnished at no extra charge so you can store and protect your collection. Your children, grandchildren, and their children will enjoy the magic of these cherished ornaments. Like Christmas itself, this glorious Hummel art will live forever!

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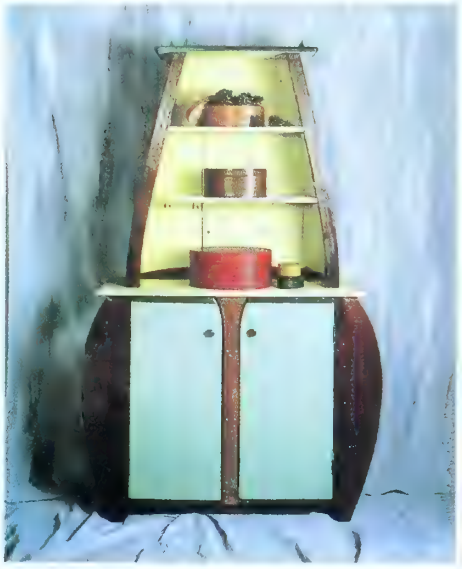
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CHOICE

What's new, what's noteworthy

NEW GUISE FOR OLD WOOD

Stephen Whittlesey's 76-inch-tall Lily Pond cupboard, *below,* made from salvaged wood brightly painted, can be had for $2,850 at the Gallery at Workbench, 470 Park Ave. South, New York City.





TO THE QUEEN'S TASTE

The Victorian Garden offers vintage handmade linens for the single or double bed and for tea- to banquet-size tables. This fine Italian lace and cutwork tablecloth ($700), above, *dates back to the 1860s. By appointment only: (718) 544-1657.*

BEAUTIFUL BEASTS

Seven artists and author George MacKay Brown depict mythological and local beasts in *The Scottish Bestiary, below.* Limited editions: book $3,600, prints $6,000. Fawbush Editions; (212) 966-6650.



ARRIVALS FROM BRITAIN

From Kings of Sheffield's new store in New York comes this classic Queen Anne–style tea service, *below.* Silver plate with a woodlike heat-resistant handle, it is sold as a set, including tea and coffee pots, sugar bowl, and creamer, for $780. The English firm makes tableware and accessories of silver, silver plate, and stainless steel in their country's traditional patterns. Kings of Sheffield is at 505 Park Ave.; (212) 832-8711.



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GENRE PIECE

The original Carlton House writing table, above, *made c. 1785 for the future Prince Regent's London residence, is thought to have given its name to the genre. Now it can be yours for £265,000, at Mallett, 40 New Bond St.; London 499-7411.*



DIG WE MUST

Serious garden tools, *left,* of forged carbon steel with ash handles are $7.50 for the hand fork, $9.50 for trowel. Heavy sheepskin gloves cost about $13. Available through Smith & Hawken's catalogue; (415) 383-4050.

CUPBOARD: JON JENSEN. LINENS. BESTIARY. TEA SERVICE. GARDEN TOOLS. MICHAEL MUNDY



Snow leopards in the Himalayas. Tigers in the wilds of India. Mountain gorillas and lions in Africa. Jaguars in the swamps of Brazil.

George Schaller, pictured here with a snow leopard, has spent years in remote and rugged places studying the natural history of rare animals—and fighting for their survival.

He sees these animals as symbols of the habitats in which they live. Preserve their habitats and thousands of other plants and animals will be assured of a home.

As director of Wildlife Conservation International, a division of the New York Zoological Society, Schaller and the staff have helped establish more than 50 reserves around the world.



One of the 1000 remaining giant pandas.

He points out that the destruction of environments is now so drastic that, in the decades ahead, the nature of life on earth will be irrevocably changed.

For Schaller, saving fragments of nature is an urgent task.

Recently he faced one of his greatest challenges. With Chinese scientists, he collaborated in a project to save the 1000 giant pandas still alive in the wild. Currently he is working on the Tibetan plateau to help preserve the wildlife of those remote uplands.

"Future generations must be inheritors... not just survivors."

George Schaller

Since his work takes him to some of the most forbidding places on earth, choosing the right equipment is crucial. Not surprisingly, Schaller wears a Rolex.



China: Site of panda rescue mission



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Inhospitable conditions seem to pose no problem for George Schaller. Or his Rolex.

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ON VIEW

Current exhibitions not to be missed



Leonardo, *Studies of Arms and Hands*, 1475–78.

WINDSOR JEWELS

For more than three centuries England's monarchs have been buying up great drawings and stashing them away in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle. Today Queen Elizabeth II possesses the world's top private collection of some 30,000 old master works on paper. The strongest suit in the royal holdings is a spectacular aggregation of Italian drawings, dating from the 15th through 18th centuries and including a mind-boggling group of 600 Leonardos. Currently 61 of these Italian treasures—by Giovanni Bellini, Michelangelo, and Raphael, among others—are in "Italian Master Drawings from the British Royal Collection: Leonardo to Canaletto" at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, through July 26. Connoisseurs of drawing may want to swoon. The show travels to San Francisco and Chicago. *David Bourdon*



Battista Piazzetta's genre scene, 1743



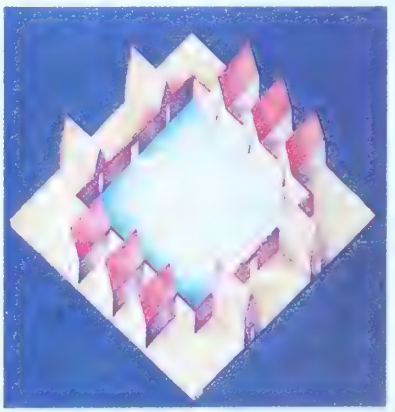
Canaletto, *Architectural Fantasy*, 1648–55

REVISIONIST VISIONS



Aldo Rossi, *Dormitory in Chieti*, 1976

In "Die Revision der Moderne: Postmodern Architecture, 1960–1980," on view at the Williams College Museum of Art in Williamstown, Massachusetts, through July 20 (organized by the German Architecture Museum in Frankfurt), the Postmodern stance is borne out in an array of designs by a number of contemporary architects as diverse as Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Michael Graves, and James Stirling. No photographs of built work are included in the exhibit, curated by Heinrich Klotz; only paintings, drawings, and models optimistically convey the architects' personal visions unrevised by the harsh realities of construction. The show should provoke interest—at least of the historical sort—as we meander through an architectural age in which "form follows factions." *Suzanne Stephens*



Massimo Scolari, *Recinto Urbano*, 1979



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A QUIET PLACE FOR ART

Architect Renzo Piano's new Menil museum in Houston embodies the personal but self-effacing point of view of its remarkable patron

By Martin Filler

Insofar as a building can resemble the person who commissions it, so does the new Menil Collection in Houston, which opened on June 7, seem much like its prime mover, Dominique de Menil. At a time when collecting and museum sponsorship have become highly homogeneous and overwhelmingly directed toward personal and institutional aggrandizement—often at the expense of the art itself—this refreshingly self-effacing enterprise speaks in far more decorous tones about the proper use of private wealth to enhance the public good. Although it is almost exactly the size of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's new twentieth-century wing, the Menil Collection in contrast seems thoughtful and restrained, which is just the way Mrs. de Menil wanted it, and bears telling testimony to her extraordinary commitment and singular point of view.



Top: The Menil museum is clad in gray-stained cypress and framed in white-painted steel. *Above:* Colonnade surrounding museum on all four sides is shaded by fixed ferroconcrete louvers.

The Genoa-based architect Renzo Piano (best known for his design, with Richard Rogers, of the Centre Pompidou in Paris, completed ten years ago) has endowed the Menil Collection with an austere but humane demeanor. Built on a tree-shaded block in a modest residential neighborhood not far from the city's center, the two-story, 100,000-square-foot rectangular structure was planned to fit unobtrusively into its low-rise surroundings: a collection of 1920s bungalows (gray siding with white-painted wood trim), some now housing offices for the museum and the Menil Foundation.

Clad in handsome gray-stained cypress crisply defined by white-painted steel framing detailed with Miesian precision and purity, the museum is surrounded on all four sides by a modern version of a colonnaded veranda, grand in scale without being unduly

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SCREEN: Flemish painted six fold screen, first quarter of the 19th Century.

DESK: Unusual Regency mahogany library desk with brass gallery, circa 1810.

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monumental. That peripheral porch is shaded from the scorching Texas sun by an ingenious system of gracefully curved louvers, ranged in rows and also employed within the building. Those fixed leaves of white ferroconcrete are topped by panels of laminated ultraviolet filter glass. Although only about one percent of the available natural light penetrates into the exhibition spaces, the galleries have a remarkably radiant aura. Yet one is not so aware of the illumination as one is at Louis Kahn's celebrated Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth, where the architect's dramatic handling of light is at times too distracting.

There is nothing at all attention-grabbing at the Menil. Floors are planks of dark-stained pine. Walls are painted the standard Modernist white neither architect nor client felt impelled to reject. And for welcome visual relief from the intense works of art that typify the collection—the feverish subconscious visions of the Surrealists as well as the ferocious fetishes of tribal societies around the world—there are dispersed among the galleries several glass-walled atrium gardens filled with cooling greenery.

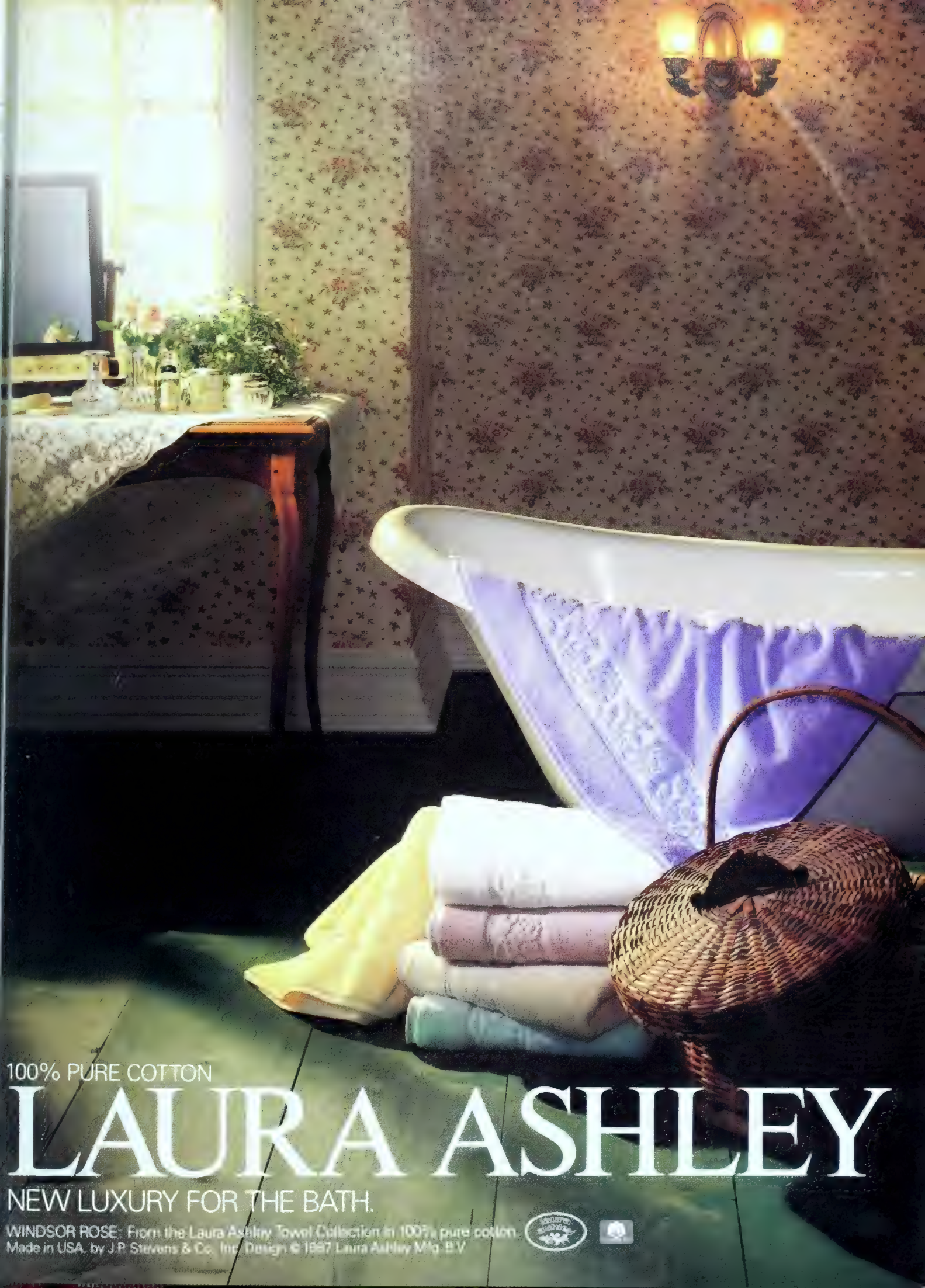
It was the patron's intention from the outset to limit display areas and show selections on a rotating basis from the 10,000-piece collection (about half of which is evenly divided between painting and sculpture, the remainder consisting of works on paper, including photography). Mrs. de Menil's intellectual concerns are even more specifically expressed in the extensive portions of the building devoted to research, study, and conservation. The best of the collection's unexhibited works are not kept, as is the practice in most museums, on sliding racks in some inaccessible warehouse or subterranean storage room; instead they are hung in the extensive and commodious study galleries on the second floor, informally arranged on walls protected from the ravages of daylight by sliding panels that close off the floor-to-ceiling windows. The Menils collected a few artists—especially Max Ernst and René Magritte—in considerable depth, and the study galleries provide revealing overviews of their oeuvres, a luxury only dreamed of by scholars confined to reproductions in catalogues raisonnés. There is also an in-house framing department (which strives for historical accuracy even in postwar art, now becoming yet another period style) and a well-equipped conservation lab. One recent project is the repair of the massive black-on-maroon canvases from the adjacent Rothko Chapel, an earlier benefice of the Menils.





Menil museum's glass-walled plant-filled atriums, *top*, were inspired by Philip Johnson's Menil house of 1950, *above*.

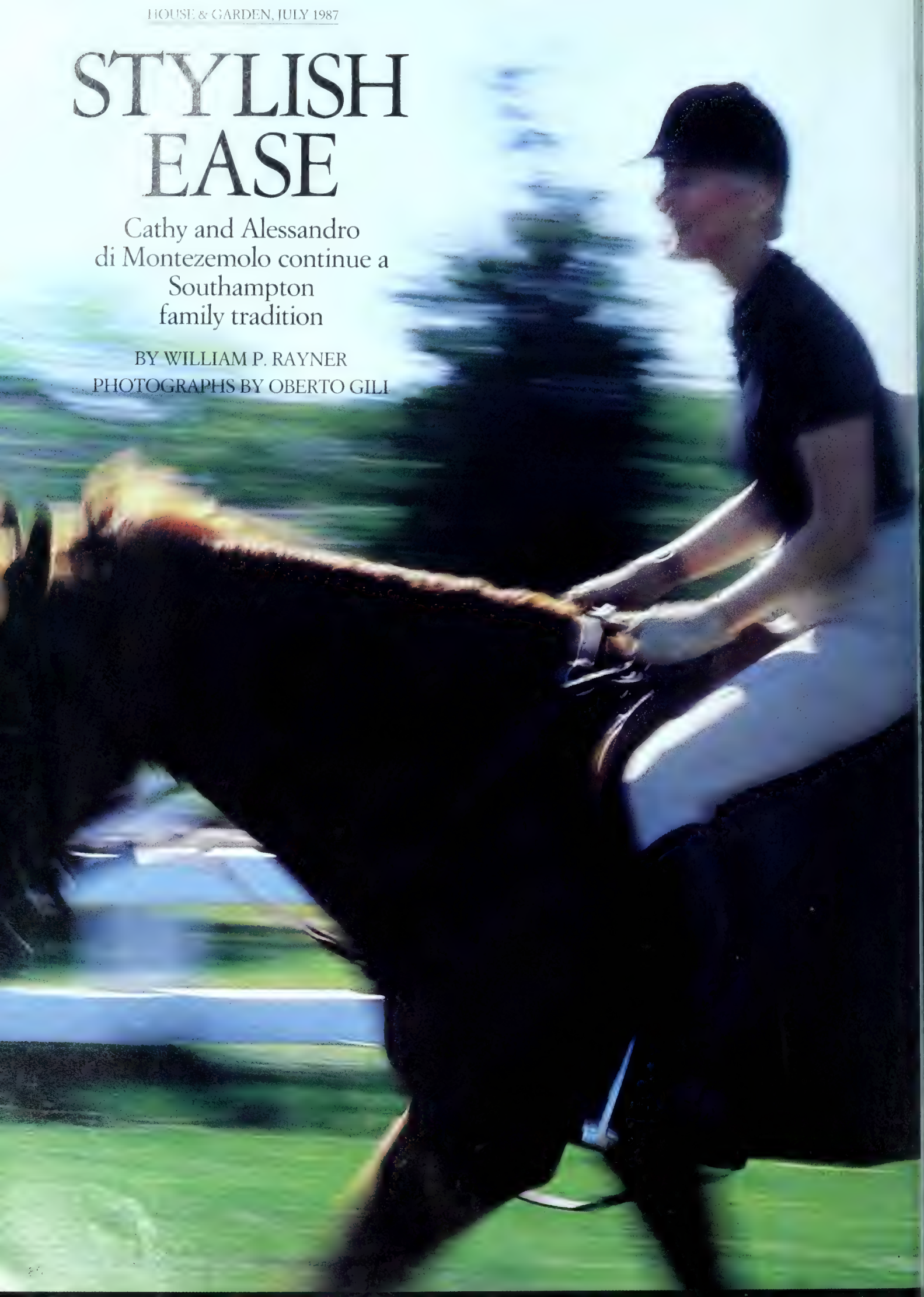
The Menil museum is perhaps most unusual for what it does not have: no pompous inscriptions, no expanses of exotic woods or rare marbles, no restaurant, no gift shop. An astringent air of Cartesian clarity and Jansenist simplicity pervades the place, making the architecture seem distinctly cerebral despite its lack of philosophical pretense. Its low-key aesthetic and almost palpable inner spirit derive from an older (and regrettably almost vanished) American ethos, one which its fellow institutions around the country might proudly emulate. □


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STYLISH EASE

Cathy and Alessandro di Montezemolo continue a Southampton family tradition

BY WILLIAM P. RAYNER
PHOTOGRAPHS BY OBERTO GILI









Far out on Long Island, beyond a placid pond, *above,* the Montezemolo house with stables at left. *Opposite:* Covered wicker chaise on the porch. *Preceding pages:* Cathy di Montezemolo atop Eliza Doolittle out for a morning ride; wicker on lattice-lined porch.

Cathy di Montezemolo knew from the beginning that the grass was no greener on the other side of the street. And with good reason, for, as she says, "no one could have had a better childhood than I had in Southampton." Born into a large close-knit New York family with four sisters and two brothers, she would leave the city each spring with them and spend the summer on an enormous stretch of property, just east of the village of Southampton, that they shared with their cousins, the McDonnells. The two families would go for the summer where she and the other children could "ride across the meadows and potato fields because there was so much land and so much space." There were also miles of private beach, virtually inaccessible to the rest of the world, on which to have picnics, build sand castles, and ride the waves.

Each Christmas during school vacation, the Murrays and the McDonnells would pack their children into a caravan of cars to be driven out to the compound where up on the dunes the fortresslike houses silhouetted against the bleak sky of a North Atlantic winter would be ablaze with lights to welcome them. She recalls a huge concave lawn in front of the house where the ice would form in winter. They would skate on it every afternoon until it was dark and they were frozen and ready for hot chocolate in front of an open fire. "It was a lovely life," she says.

Cathy never wanted to live anywhere else, and, except for four years during the 1970s when she and her husband, Alessandro, moved to Milan, she has pretty much had her wish. Although a lot of the land around them has been developed, much of what she loved has remained intact. Today a sister lives in their parents' great house, and she and Alessandro occupy an infinitely cozier and definitely more practical one nearby.

The first part of their house was built in 1960 by the architect Giovanni Cardelli, and over the years they have added new elements as needed or as their lives changed. They built a pool house in which there is also a studio where Cathy designs the collections that are sold under her own label at Lord & Taylor. (There she is director of special



The light-flooded porch off the drawing room provides a peaceful focus for summer living. Wicker furniture, except for the chaise in the corner, is antique.




SARGENT
Impressionists and Impressionism



Casual stripes, polished wood floors, and a gros point rug by Cathy di Montezemolo add up to exuberant informality in the drawing room, *left* and *above*. Bamboo ladder was found in Paris, the étagères in Milan.

projects.) With the help of the late Robert Welsh of Roger Roberts, the landscape specialists, they added a privet hedge, some apple trees, a cutting-and-kitchen garden, and a pond. Alessandro, who was an Italian cavalry officer, high-goal polo player, and crack jumper, had always planned to keep horses, so after retiring four years ago as chairman of Marsh & McLennan, the worldwide insurance company, he engaged Peter Paul Muller to design the stables.

Their property is entered through a gate in the white split-rail fence that surrounds the grounds. To the left can be seen a pond and paddocks with jumps in place. The visitor enters a courtyard covered in light tan gravel surrounded on three sides by single-story buildings. The look is very much that of a French stable. To the left are the stalls, a tack room, and Alessandro's office, which is painted a dark hunting green with sporting pictures by Henry Koehler on the walls, dozens of silver trophies he has won over the years in riding competitions together with photographs, lined up on the shelves, of everyone from Dwight Eisenhower to Clark Gable. Back in the courtyard, directly facing the visitor, is the drawing-room wing and to the right the west wing and main entrance to the house. Here is also a guest room

The airy dining room, *below,* has an English pine corner cabinet; the porcelain tulips, some of them French antiques, were collected over the years. Sparkling Tiffany silver tea service once belonged to Cathy's grandmother. *Opposite:* Hanging baskets in the flower room.



and, at the other end of the wing, the master bedroom. From the courtyard the house appears somewhat French, yet inside it becomes one hundred percent American with vivid gros point rugs (which Cathy makes herself), furniture upholstered in gaily colored striped cotton and linen by Angelo Donghia, her grandmother's silver coffee service polished to an ultrahigh sheen, and masses of flowers taken from the garden.

Behind the drawing room is the glassed-in sun porch, with lattice covering the walls and white wicker furniture, fronting onto the pool. It is here during the summer that the Montezemolos give their Sunday lunches, serving delicious light fare such as chilled curry carrot soup, rice salad, fresh mozzarella with tomatoes and basil, a green salad, fruit, and a good bottle of chilled white Gavi or a red Grignolino.

Cathy has always decorated her own interiors, but she gives great credit for the overall look of the house to the late Jack Bodi of Bodi-Seidman. But while decorating has always been an interest (she comes by it naturally, having been a fashion editor for *Vogue* and a European editor for *Harper's Bazaar*), it is really riding that takes over her life in the country. Every morning that they are in Southampton she and Alessandro saddle up their horses and go out to the paddock to practice jumping or into the fields to ride over the land Cathy knows so well. She is correct: it is a lovely life. □ *Editor: Babs Simpson*




CONQUERING



A CALIFORNIA HILLSIDE





Architect, landscape architect, and owner craft an integrated house and garden

BY WILLIAM BRYANT LOGAN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACQUES DIRAND

This is a steep property," she says, looking out from the terrace to the garden below, the live oaks beyond, and the curve of the bay in the distance. Behind the house the mountains of the coast range rise smoothly to dull points. Coastal sage and blooming California lilac cover them with a blue gray tone, relieved by irregular outcrops of yellowish rock.

The owner of this spectacular setting has lived for some years in this community on the south coast of California. The house she occupied for more than a decade—a pleasant and understated Spanish-style place set in an olive grove—lies a quick lizard's scamper down the hill from the dramatic residence she created in 1983. After her husband's death the old place had seemed too large. "He was such a great gardener," she remembers. "I would have had to hire another full-time gardener just to replace him."

When she decided to make a new house—a place in which she could at last settle down with her essential things—it didn't take long to find her architect. "I'd visited Paul Gray's own house a long time before," she says, "and I thought that if I ever built a place, he would be the architect." Gray, of Warner & Gray Architects, had done *(Text continued on page 186)*

Nature, architecture, and art combine to stunning effect in this southern California house by the sea. Here, in the sitting room, is part of an extensive ceramics collection. *Preceding pages.* Bougainvillea and espaliered fig trees ease the transition between geometric house and compartmented garden.

The craftsmanlike dining table and elliptical hanging sideboard, *above,* are the work of Paul Tuttle. *Below from left* A clean-lined salt-glazed pot by Ann Mallory contrasts with a Neoclassical Chippendale chest-on-chest; the corallike fingers of *Senecio serpens* set off the aptly named *Agave potatorum;* John Mason's *Stellar Blue Twisting Square* is flanked by two Havell Audubon prints.







The owner's bedroom, *above,* with windows that overlook the distant sea, also has a niche for ceramics. *Below from left:* A quail-shaped faucet handle sits on a wooden perch concealing a garden pipe; the pure curve of a pot by New Zealander Campbell Hegan on the stair rail confronts the straight lines of a blue black weaving by Austrian Marga Persson; the play of color and scale between *Aeonium urbicum* and baby's-tears.

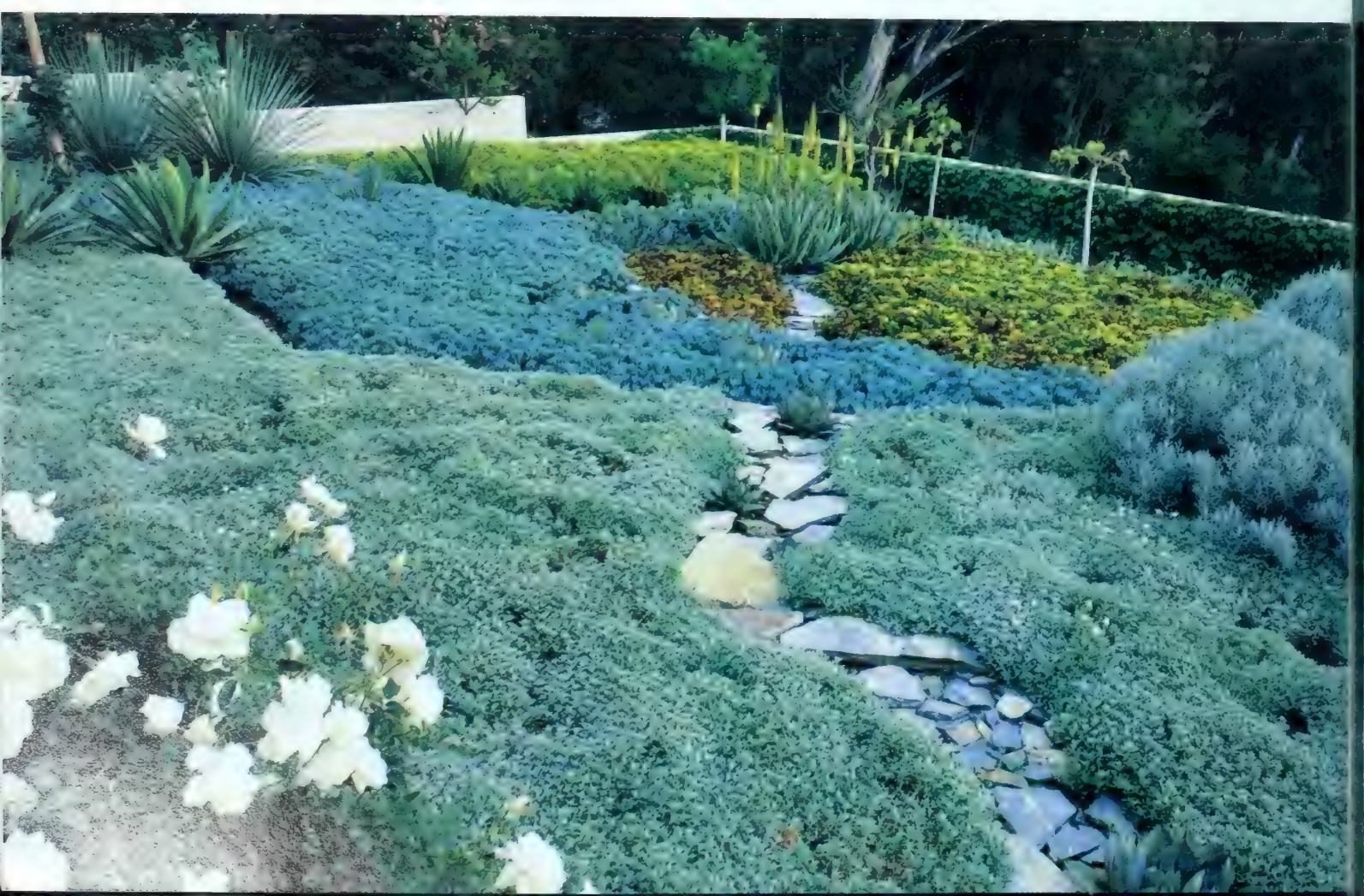








A stepped wall, *above,* holds the steep bank above a parking area. Citrus trees, hollyhocks, agaves, and trailing rosemary thrive in the hot sun. *Below:* A stone "stream" winds through garden terraces among masses of snow-in-summer (*Cerastium tomentosum*) and *Senecio serpens*. *Opposite:* A portion of the Zen-like forecourt garden planted with contrasting textures in both horizontal and vertical planes.









Visitors who walk out onto the south terrace of the house are rewarded with a view of the stepped garden below. A fence of cordoned apple trees marks the edge of the raised beds, and a slender copper arbor anchors the southwest corner.





A VIENNA SUCCESS

In just over a year Ronald and Jo Carole Lauder have mastered the fine art of diplomacy

BY TRAUDL LESSING PHOTOGRAPHS BY KAREN RADKAI

George Washington, in a portrait by Gilbert Stuart, *opposite,* reigns benevolently over a sideboard filled with Viennese pastries and American confections. *Above:* The residence dining room, where the Lauders frequently entertain American and Austrian guests.

One of the most popular beverages one can order in a Vienna coffeehouse is a *Melange,* a fifty-fifty mixture of coffee and milk. A mélange of a slightly different kind is what Ronald S. Lauder, the U.S. ambassador to Austria and his wife, Jo Carole, are trying to achieve during their tour of duty in Vienna.

Their mélange consists of American and Austrian guests, food from both countries, and a mixture of art from either shore of the Atlantic. So far, none of the ingredients have clashed. "The reason we're here is to get both communities to meet," says Mrs. Lauder. "We're trying to get to know as many Austrians as possible, and that way we learn about Austria. And then, when we have American guests, we try to introduce them to someone they would like to know on the Austrian side. One night we have a lot of bankers, then educators and artists, and there are always some nice things that come out of it. The most an ambassador can do is get the people to know one another and work together." They both try, she says, to give their guests a positive feeling about things that go on in Austria—and that entails a lot of entertaining.

Elegant and cool in black skirt and white sweater, Jo Carole Lauder relaxes on a thick-cushioned couch, covered in a Backhausen replica of a silver-and-black Josef Hoffmann fabric, in the residence's "morning room." A pleasant white-walled room that looks out on a spacious garden, it was designed by Ann Le Coney, who also decorated the residence's official rooms as well as the Lauders' private quarters.

The morning room is the Lauders' favorite and is called by them the "Schatzkammer," or treasury. It is a roomful of treasures all right. The visitor's eye is caught first by the wall opposite the entrance: in two rows of



three hang six Egon Schiele drawings and watercolors. They are of the milder variety, not the painter's tortured, undernourished bodies but wonderfully precise portraits and one large sunflower. To the Lauders these drawings seem like aquafortis, the magic liquid that separates gold from silver and the initiated from the less fortunate. "Knowing about art—and loving it—makes such a difference in the people you meet."

The Lauders bought the Schieles, eight in all, and two Klimts during the first six years of their twenty-year marriage. Their collecting began when, as a wedding gift from their in-laws, they were offered a work of art: "And so we were browsing, looking at an Art Nouveau lamp by Tiffany and then at an Erich Heckel tempera from 1910. In the end we chose the Heckel, and that started us on drawings and paintings and on our favorite period. Had we chosen the lamp, who knows?" Jo Carole, who was an art major in college, feels lucky to have spent her grownup life with such strong pictures. "We had the pictures before we had the children. And now they simply grow up with them, and I think that is wonderful; it gives them another dimension." Their daughters, seventeen and fourteen, are yet too young to begin collecting on their own. But, according to their proud mother, they are learning to live with beautiful things. "It trains their eyes and minds, and when they see things in museums or good architecture, they will respond, as one responds to good music."

Anniversaries are usually celebrated with gifts of art. A stark brick red torso of a man, another Schiele, hangs above a Franz Kline black-ink drawing that was a gift on their first wedding anniversary. Jo Carole's pairing of the Schiele and the Kline is a stroke of genius which enhances both. The two matched pictures hang in the morning room *(Text continued on page 176)*

Jo Carole Lauder, *opposite,* in the morning room with drawings by Egon Schiele and a glass-shaded lamp designed by Josef Hoffmann, 1901. *Left:* Also in the morning room, a Wiener Werkstätte ebony chest inlaid with mother-of-pearl, 1913; demitasse set by Hoffmann; drawing by Franz Kline, 1952, and, above it, a torso of a man by Schiele.



The American guest wing was designed by Jo Carole Lauder, with Riki Gail Interiors, and donated to the residence. In the sitting room are 19th-century quilts, framed etchings of quilt designs, the Lauders' collection of 19th-century spongeware pitchers, swan and duck decoys.





ARCHITECTURE FOR THE BIRDS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICK HALES



Classical belvedere, *opposite,* designed for screech owls, by Robert A. M. Stern Architects. *Above from left:* Birdhouses by Wayne Berg, Raymond Gomez, Dale Booher, Richard R. Sawicki, and William J. Reese.

Late this spring eastern Long Island awoke to a sprouting of architectural wonders—not an unusual state of affairs in the Hamptons perhaps, except this time the houses were literally for the birds. More than half of the one hundred architects invited by the Parrish Art Museum in Southampton to design "actual dwellings" for the local avian population took up the challenge and produced birdhouses as various and colorful as their intended occupants. *Editors: Heather Smith MacIsaac and Senga Mortimer*





Michael Graves designed
the double-turreted structure at far left
as a wren house. Other birdhouses were created
by Ronald H. Schmidt (for the great-crested flycatcher),
Charles Moore with Arthur Andersson (for the Bewick's wren), Theresa
Angelini (for the bluebird), and Alfredo de Vido (for the black-capped chickadee).





EARLY AMERICAN PLEASURES



The Whipple House in Ipswich, Massachusetts, preserves the luxurious side of Puritan life BY KATHERINE WHITESIDE PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICK HALES





"Tradition is ludicrously unhistoric . . . no more reliable than the common gossip of the town," wrote the Reverend Thomas Waters in 1897 in an effort to urge his fellow townspeople in Ipswich, Massachusetts, to commit an act unprecedented in New England's history. After many painstaking hours, pouring over deeds of sale, wills, and town records, Waters was convinced that Ipswich's Whipple House, then used as a summer residence by the Bond family, was one of the oldest houses in America. His studious research—"no guesswork, no hasty assumptions, no romantic fancies tolerated"—revealed that the older portion of the house had been built by Puritans about 1640 and by 1642 was inhabited by John Whipple.

Waters wrote copiously and spoke eloquently. He convinced the conservative, typically New England townspeople to make an unusual move. The Ipswich Historical Society purchased Whipple House in 1898, completed restorations, and in 1899 opened the house for public tours.

Today Elizabeth Newton, who serves as curator at Whipple House and has lived there for over 33 years, says that she is sure the house was one of the first to be opened to the public and that it is one of the oldest dwellings of America's earliest settlers—and certainly the best documented. Besides making this claim for its historical position, she adds that Whipple House also offers proof that the dour Puritan of elementary schoolbooks is a "sadly incorrect stereotype."

To appreciate the importance of Whipple House, the original milieu must also be understood. Founded in 1633 and incorporated in 1634, Ipswich was along the second line of settlement in the Massachusetts Bay Colony and was the result of an orderly

A portrait of the Reverend George Whitefield overlooks the upstairs parlor built by John Whipple Jr. Oriental export china pieces are on yoke-front mahogany desk and 17th-century chest; bottle is early-19th-century etched glass. *Preceding pages:* To the left of the door is the original 1640 house; to the right is two-story addition built before 1683.



The first-floor great room, *above,* served for cooking, entertaining, and sleeping. Bed folds up and stands on four front legs. *Opposite:* Clam shell paths divide six beds of the re-created dooryard garden.

migration of gentlefolk and artisans from comfortable English homes. A great many of the settlers were Puritans. Far from being a rude fortification in the wilderness, seventeenth-century Ipswich was a bustling village of leaders—in government, church, and society—who were important in the Bay Colony.

The first houses to be built in the settlement were by no means grand, but neither were they hovels. The Puritans were generally townspeople and farmers, not woodsmen, and in settling what was essentially a wilderness, they built simple structures of hand-sawn lumber and gunstock posts and beams. Small diamond-paned windows overlooked gardens maintained for food and medicine. Such a garden was re-created for the Whipple House, and Ann Leighton tells its story in Garden Pleasures, page 20.

In furnishing their houses Ipswich settlers benefited from the experience of those who preceded them. Because room-by-room, item-by-item inventories were an essential part of every seventeenth-century Ipswich will, there is documentary evidence that huge roasting pans, enormous spits, English furniture, and even silk quilts were used by the earliest residents.

Fine clothing came from England, and letters back home inquiring about silver lace, pearl buttons, and the width of sleeves show that the Puritans, hitherto considered dowdy, took a lively interest in fashion. Although stern ministers denounced wigs and tailor-made clothes, Waters's studies led him to the conclusion that the "plain houses and plainer meeting-houses were radiant on Sabbath and high days with bright colors and fine fabrics." Indeed, he adds, the "frugal existence of our Puritan forefathers has been greatly exaggerated."

Into this setting came John Whipple, who had left his comfortable home in Bocking, near Ipswich, England, sometime between 1636 and 1638. The younger son of a wool merchant who had suffered setbacks, he was a professed dissenter from the established Church of England. When he arrived in the New World, he joined approximately 4,000 other Puritans, the religious group with greatest influence throughout the colony. His change of





Early 19th-century Sheraton style bed in the upstairs bedroom has netted tester, hand-woven cotton and wool coverlet is in Cross and Crown pattern. Cradle, from late 18th century, holds 19th-century doll. *Opposite:* Washstand has set of Oriental export ware in Fitchugh pattern, hatboxes are 19th century.

status from England to New England was considerable.

John Whipple quickly became a renowned middle-class gentleman in the settlement of Ipswich, holding the important position of deacon and then ruling elder. Although not university trained, he was friend to those who were, and counted the Saltonstalls, Wards, Sewalls, Winthrops, and Bradstreets—family of the poet Anne Bradstreet—among his close friends.

John Whipple died in 1669, leaving his house and humble estate to his son, also named John. The son further improved his lot, becoming a militia captain and a very wealthy man. John Senior's grandson, the third generation to live in the house, was a militia major, and a few generations later a descendant named William was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Whipple descendants lived in the house until 1833. Thereafter the building changed hands several times. It was finally bought in 1898 by the Ipswich Historical Society, which owns it to this day. Sherman Whipple, during his rededication speech of Whipple House in 1929, described his first American ancestor as a "Puritan, typifying all their virtues and failings." Certainly the house that he built was a "house to last through the centuries."

The original house was a two-story one-over-one building with a small attic. But, as Mrs. Newton says, the house grew: "It was first just a great room and with a sleeping room above, topped with a rough attic. Soon two more rooms, one over one, were added on the other side, leaving the staircase in the middle. The additional rooms were here by 1683 because when the second John died, it was at least a four-room house."

Over the years partitions and leantos were added to provide extra bedrooms, and modernizations, such as whitewashed walls and plaster ceilings, added touches of nineteenth-century sophistication. But there were no major alterations to the original structure. In 1897 Thomas Waters made note of this when he wrote that the "sleepy, unprogressive life that prevailed in Ipswich for 100 years or more means that a substantial number of 'mansions' were preserved in pristine simplicity. . . . They escaped remodeling and nearly all

(Text continued on page 184)







The kitchen, added at the same time as the parlor, has an early-18th-century table and a display cupboard built when the house opened to the public in 1899. *Opposite:* The great-room window; 17th-century account book.



A GIFT OF VISION

On the opening of her new museum, Dominique de Menil reflects on the Houston house where it all began

BY ROSAMOND BERNIER

PHOTOGRAPHS BY OBERTO GILI

Not long after I came back to live in the United States in the early 1970s I was invited by Jean and Dominique de Menil to spend time in their house in Houston. I was lecturing at the time at Rice University—at the Menils' invitation—and it made practical sense for me to live in their guest house. It also made human sense, in ways that I shall always remember. Not only did I get to know Jean and Dominique and have the run of their remarkable art library, but I was allowed to stay on even when they were away. On those occasions I soon realized to what extent they opened their house to people of every age, nationality, color, activity, and religious orientation.

I remember coming home one evening and seeing through a big window

Designed by Philip Johnson for the Menils in 1950, the house is a sparely elegant showcase for art of all kinds: on left, *People Begin to Fly* by Yves Klein, 1961, and bronze sculpture by Takis; beyond, two African tribal pieces and a late-13th-century French Madonna and Child. Two still lifes by Louis Fernandez hang over a pair of Belter chairs.



Dominique de Menil in the living room before a frottage by Max Ernst, who was a close friend of the Menils. *Opposite:* The new Menil Collection museum, designed by Renzo Piano, has an ingenious louver system, which shades the building from the Houston sun.





Braque's *Interior with Palette* hangs at one end of the living room over the grand piano selected by Charles James. Colors in the room were chosen to blend with the Braque. James also designed the curved sofa at right.

the Italian movie director Roberto Rossellini. With him were three of his children—the twins by Ingrid Bergman and the little boy by his Indian wife. Other times, a monoglot French Dominican priest called Father Duployé would hold forth to me on everything from the *Pensées* of Pascal to Apollinaire and the Surrealists. Though out of town at the time when Buckminster Fuller, Max Ernst and Dorothea Tanning, Agnes de Mille, Alexander Calder, Louis Kahn, and Henri Cartier-Bresson were in the guest house and too early for the historic visit of the Turkish whirling dervishes, I was present at the inauguration of the Rothko Chapel, when religious leaders of every kind and stripe walked in procession and Dominique herself looked not at all out of place among them.

It was already clear to me that Dominique and Jean were very remarkable human beings. Thanks to the great firm of Schlumberger, without whose inventions it had become almost impossible to strike oil, they were in a position to do pretty much as they liked in life. They collected art on an encyclopedic scale—so much so, in fact, that in the new museum that Dominique has caused to be built in Houston their collections can be shown only on a rotating basis. What is less well known is that since Jean de Menil died in 1973, Dominique has devoted herself 365



At the other end of the living room is Chirico's *Hector and Andromache*. Through the door can be seen a corridor, painted with James's bright colors and densely hung with small paintings and drawings.

days a year to the problems of worldwide human rights and religious freedom, together with the practical problems of India, the Arab countries, Africa, and black America. Concurrently she moved forward with plans for the museum, which was designed by the Italian architect Renzo Piano in accordance with her wish that it should "look small on the outside and be big on the inside."

The recent opening of the Menil Collection in Houston was a collective enterprise in which the Menil Foundation—set up by Dominique and Jean—was joined by the Brown Foundation, Cullen Foundation, Hobby Foundation, Houston Endowment, and private contributors in Houston. That huge and curious city had come a long way since the time when, as Mrs. de Menil has said, "people in Houston wouldn't *dream* of spending $5,000 on a painting. They'd put $30,000 into a bull, but into a painting? Never!"

Enthusiasm for the museum has been prompted primarily by the exceptional size, range, and quality of the Menils' own collections, but also because the Menil Foundation had for many years followed an exhibitions policy that was the reverse of elitist. People remembered how they had taken a derelict old movie theater in a black section of the city and reopened it as a gallery in which for the first time



Mrs. de Menil's talent for installation is legendary. An important Picasso, *opposite,* hangs over a carefully selected group of sculpture, mostly African. Small painting is by Juan Gris. *Above:* Her simply furnished bedroom, with an African cross from the 17th or 18th century and Dubuffet's *Texturologie,* 1957.

a large exhibition of African tribal art was made available to people who had never expected to find art on their own doorstep.

People also remembered one of Dominique de Menil's more unexpected inspirations—the children's exhibition at the Rice Museum in 1971. "It took the form of a maze," Dominique de Menil remembers, "with real works of art in it. They turned this way and that, and wherever they went, they found something surprising and of high quality. Then there was a tunnel where they had to go on all fours, and a place where they could make their own art. If they wanted to make collages, they could look at Matisse paper cut-outs on the wall. All that happened in a kind of glass box where people could look in and see them work. Children are very interested in art, but you have to catch them the right way."

Many of the shows that Mrs. de Menil organized and installed could come under the heading of "Out of This World," the title of an exhibition organized by the late Jermayne MacAgy, who came to Houston as the Menils' first professional curator. The eleven shows staged by Mrs. MacAgy between 1958 and 1964 set a tremendous pace, but not one that left Mrs. de Menil behind when Mrs. MacAgy's death in 1964 forced her to continue on her own. There was nothing that she wouldn't do, no one that she wouldn't bring to Houston (from Beatrice Lillie to the Dalai Lama), and nothing in the pursuit of disinterested education that she and her husband would not work to forward.

If the new museum gives her untold pleasure, it is not from vanity. Nor is it because she has a polemical point of view to put forward. "I don't start from any specific concept," she will say, if asked. "It's just natural with me. I love to explain." And if people speak of her gift for installation, she makes light of that, too. "First I try to understand the objects and find out what they have to say. Then I try to help them say it. The important thing is to place them in a surrounding where they can talk. It's rather like making up the table at a dinner party."

Of course, it makes it easier if you have a lot to choose from. For instance, the Menils bought an extensive collection of small Byzantine bronzes in Istanbul *(Text continued on page 180)*







A restrained jungle fills the glass-enclosed atrium off the entrance hall and living room. Mrs. de Menil found the Venetian sofa in New York and had it covered with green silk bought in Paris. At the entrance to the living room, against the screen, are two figures by the Boyo people, northeastern Zaire, 19th century.



PARISIAN EXOTIC

The luminous Left Bank apartment of François and Carole Rochas

BY JEAN-MARIE BARON
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACQUES DIRAND

It isn't that Carole and François Rochas spend their lives rushing from place to place to meet the many demands of their various occupations. They often shun the hectic outside world, preferring the warm atmosphere of family life in their Paris apartment. However, the main activity of François, son of perfume queen Hélène Rochas, often keeps him in the heart of the Bordeaux country: for the past twelve years he has owned a very good little Bordeaux winery called Château Lagarosse, and he attends passionately to every stage of the wine-making process, working to improve the vine stock steadily year by year. Carole joins him there regularly with their two children, Pauline and Nicolas, and together they entertain visiting friends in the delightful château, which is decorated in the Second Empire style and surrounded by a garden overflowing with flowers. In truth, their life divides itself quite naturally between Château Lagarosse, where they also spend Christmas and summer vacations, and their home base, on the rue de l'Université, in the center of Paris's Left Bank.

"Actually," Carole says, "I probably feel most at home here in Paris. Maybe it's because I've decorated the entire place myself." And also, she immediately adds, "because this is where I work—where I dream up my jewelry, design it, make it." Here in the intimacy of her own apartment, without a shop, without even a display case, Carole Rochas devotes herself to her new passion, providing the finishing touches to a woman's elegance. The first thing she does is make a prototype of a piece of jewelry—"for me," she says—which she displays by wearing it her-

Carole Rochas, *above left,* wears a Saint Laurent dress and jewelry of her own design. *Opposite:* In the dining room, a cast-bronze console with cypresses by Diego Giacometti, inlaid bronze mirror, 19th-century bronze candlesticks, and a collection of Chinese porcelain.





A mix of periods and provenances creates spirited harmony in the Rochas living room. A Louis XIII inlaid bone chair holds 18th-century Imari porcelain and a 19th-century Japanese monkey. Bronze parrot at left is by Edouard Marcel Sandoz.







A floral carpet unifies the spacious living room. Table is antique elephant saddle; 18th-century floral painting by Jan van Os



English 19th-century chaise provides a central focal point. *Opposite:* Kilim-covered chairs are pulled up to a Louis XVI table. On the mantel, a 1930s bronze lion by Leverrier.



A leopard-skin chair covering, paisley ottoman, and elephant-shaped pot add further Orientalist touches to the living room



The bronze horse by Gavrard is a gift from Hélène Rochas to her son. *Opposite:* Floral prints applied to hand-printed fabric wall covering provide an intimate setting for dining.







self. Then she takes orders, which she fills according to her clients' wishes: each piece of jewelry is made to order and is one of a kind. She never designs rings, but she adores earrings, bracelets, and necklaces, and she has recently taken to creating boxes. Her favorite materials, which she sets with precious and semiprecious stones, are sandalwood, guayacan—which turns green in the light—ebony, and, especially for summer, ivory.

"I work, design, every day—either right here or in the little office downstairs where I receive my clients." And of course her clientele consists only of friends or friends of friends who have been charmed by her original creations: Firyal de Jordanie, Marie Hélène de Rothschild, Ann Getty, Lynn Wyatt. While we chat, sipping a glass of white Château Lagarosse from a very good year, thickets of bamboo rustle in the wind. On the terraces, which border the apartment on all sides, there are pots of creeping ivy, accented by fat clumps of white amaryllis. We are on the top floor of the building, and not only does nature seem to come in through the windows, but we have a constant reminder of it in the *jardin d'hiver,* which is populated by antique bronze bird sculptures.

What dominates this intimate, comfortable, light-filled atmosphere is, in fact, its mixture of styles. As at Château Lagarosse, one finds Orientalist touches in the Second Empire style, but here the smaller spaces created by the low ceilings are carved out differently by the many chairs, consoles, and pedestal tables arranged at various points amid the profusion of objects, mostly bronzes.

Starting with the living room, which is separated into two areas by a dividing wall, one comes upon one surprise after another, for the different sensibilities here, instead of clashing, harmonize wonderfully. Maybe this is because of the unity of tones on the walls, which are covered in pale yellow damask, and on the floor, which is carpeted wall*(Text continued on page 190)*

Floral prints in the master bedroom are copies of 18th-century French cottons. Above the English mahogany bed is a pair of framed tapestries, made of pearls, c. 1880.



NEW STYLE IN THE OLD SOUTH

Architect Anthony Ames creates a modern framework for hospitality in Atlanta

BY ELAINE GREENE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ADAM BARTOS

Sheltered by a grand piano–shaped balcony, the main entrance to the Frank Hulses' house is reached by a stairway between the house wall and a gridded outer wall. *Left:* Main façade has a symmetrical gabled form, as do many older houses nearby. Wall at left shields garden terrace.

To get to Frank and Betty Hulse's new Atlanta house you drive up Peachtree, turn at Richard Meier's High Museum, and in about a minute you are there. The High and the Hulse house make an interesting albeit unintentional juxtaposition: two Modernist designs a short distance apart among traditional buildings in a city known for its conservatism. The young Atlanta architect Anthony Ames, who designed the house, acknowledges the influence of his friend Richard Meier, and both men acknowledge their debt to Le Corbusier.

The Hulses' neighborhood is called Ansley Park. It was carved out of vacant hilly land in 1904 by a developer who hired A. Z. Ruff, a onetime Olmsted associate, to lay out the building sites. Ruff devised roads that wind around small parks, providing open views to most of the houses, many of which were built within the fruitful first two decades of this century. There is a great variety of styles, and the overall effect is pure American.

Like many downtown neighborhoods across the country, Ansley Park began to decline about forty years ago, its houses subdivided and carelessly used while new suburbs were flourishing. And like many such neighborhoods, this one has turned around again in the past fifteen years as people active in the arts, professions, and business have flocked back to the city center, some taking over parents' or grandparents' Ansley Park houses. Entrepreneur Frank W. Hulse IV (known as Billy) bought his piece of Ansley Park in 1971 and lived in a 1920s house that had become two apartments. Af-



For the two-story living room, *opposite,* Anthony Ames designed the rug and tables and painted a pair of pictures that hang in niches. On the balcony are a Josef Hoffmann chair and Richard Meier chaise. *Top:* Piano-curved balcony area is a musicians gallery at party time. *Above:* In the heart of the house lies an intimate library with an arched doorway and grid motifs. Floor plan is etched on glass panel shared with foyer.





ter five years he hired Anthony Ames to build a modern pool house pavilion where the garage had stood. This building won Ames an *Architectural Record* award and Hulse some magazine and newspaper coverage on the lifestyle of a glamorous airplane-flying bachelor.

When his future wife, Betty Gladden, entered Billy Hulse's life, he called upon Ames again, this time to redesign the big house in closer harmony with the pool house. The architect discovered that too many compromises were required, and the Hulses decided to demolish and build the main house anew. The Ansley Park Civic Association was applied to, and they said in effect, "Take it down; it has few redeeming features." This watchdog group was more concerned that the new house would be a one-family design than it was with dictating architectural style. The neighbors have proved to be surprisingly tolerant of the first Modernist building on the streets of Ansley Park (the pool house having been hidden). The street façade, gabled with a bull's-eye window, is forthright and polite. When it is first seen across a green park in a hollow, the Hulse house looks as confidently and agreeably at ease on its land as any Colonial or Tudor Revival cottage a few doors away. It is a fresh bright note in the mix.

The building will be published this fall in Princeton Architectural Press's *(Text continued on page 174)*



A barrel vault lit by an oculus tops the main bedroom, *opposite,* whose secluded loggia faces the street and park. *Above:* Seen from garden terrace are pipe railings and a smokestack, some of the nautical details Ames uses. *Right:* Whirlpool tub is part of private third-floor suite.





FIN DE SIÈCLE FANTASY

In the heart of New York City, a bit of Europe that never was

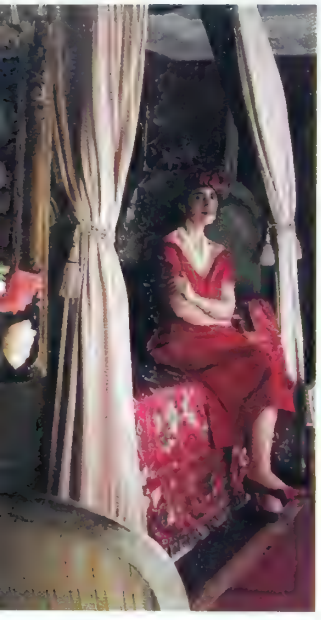
BY OLIVIER BERNIER PHOTOGRAPHS BY KAREN RADKAI



We decided to create something unique in New York, something that could not be copied or repeated, a folly really," says Mahine de Malleray of the duplex she and her husband, Pierre, designed

Past a bust of the empress Josephine, salon doors open onto a sun-dappled terrace with illusionistic painted columns and pedimented arch.





Pierre de Malleray, *top,* on the terrace. *Above:* Mahine de Malleray in 1940s hat and 1950s Dior gown sits on a *lit à la polonaise* in the bed sitting room.

An unexpected décor in an impossible space and in the wrong city, a quick trip back to a late-eighteenth-century fantasy where one expects appropriately costumed actors or singers to enter at any moment—it can all be found without difficulty in any number of theaters here and in Europe, but when that phenomenon is located in two rooms of a former Manhattan mansion, the visitor naturally feels startled.

What Pierre and Mahine de Malleray have done, in fact, is to take what was once the mansion's basement kitchen and the large space above it and turn it into a place as attractive as it seems unreal. "The late eighteenth century is the environment in which I feel most at ease," says Pierre de Malleray, a half-German, half-French decorative-arts connoisseur and collector. His wife adds: "We decided to create something unique in New York, something that could not be copied or repeated, a folly really."

Indeed, this is a playful, inventive space—an ideal setting for private fantasies as well as for entertaining. While apartments clad in authentic eighteenth-century boiseries have been around for a long time, the Malleray residence is wholly new. Neither the wall paneling in the upstairs salon, with its pilasters and niches, nor the Adam plasterwork in the downstairs bed/sitting room existed before 1982. As for the many objects strategically placed in order to enhance the illusion, they in fact are real. Some came from Pierre de Malleray's family, others were found in London, Paris, or New York, not infrequently in flea markets like Portobello Road or the Marché aux Puces. "I sent all the objects here at the same time," says Pierre de Malleray. "I had no idea where to put them until they arrived. Then everything found its place in less than twenty-four hours." The result is a décor in which trompe l'oeil is the rule.







In the fanciful bed/sitting room, *above* and *opposite,* the Malleray have artfully combined Louis XVI furniture, a Victorian chaise longue covered with antique *coton imprimé,* even a bathtub. *Left:* An Empire wallpaper panel in the winter garden echoes the apartment's neverland mood.

That is evident from the moment the door opens. To the left a narrow staircase disappears downward; in front a huge square truncated column suggests the kind of openness further hinted at by the wall on the right where mirror panes are set in a metallic grid and partly draped by a vast curtain which suggests a window. It takes a good deal of looking before the truth comes out: this is a tiny, awkwardly shaped entrance hall made vast and inviting by a series of wholly successful visual tricks.

The hall leads to the salon, which opens onto a large bow window through which a terrace can be seen, and the back wall of the terrace is painted ocher with a trompe l'oeil pediment-topped arch.

Pierre de Malleray added the bow window, replacing a door he found there, to amplify the room and provide an easy transition to the terrace. A draped and overdraped curtain, complete with passementerie loops, defines the



main opening. The curtain, along with the upholstery of the Italian Empire furniture, has that soft gleam of aged silk. That, to the Mallerays' friends, is no surprise: Mahine collects eighteenth- and nineteenth-century fabrics (as well as women's hats and 1940s and '50s couturier dresses), and the silks of the salon add to the credibility of the composition.

Antique fabrics have a similar effect downstairs in the bed/sitting room where church vestments are draped over a screen and the Louis XVI *lit à la polonaise* is curtained with antique vieux rose silk and covered with a splendid burgundy damask. A late-eighteenth-century *coton imprimé* has been found for the chaise longue, and voile curtains, originally made for a villa in Monaco, define the entrance to the winter garden.

A strategically placed old English hospital bathtub behind the low chaise becomes yet another unexpected element. Indeed there is so much to be seen in this room that the main illusion takes awhile to assert itself: through the winter garden, the eye comes to rest on a marble basin topped by an arched marble frame. In this frame is a trompe l'oeil garden scene that ends in a pavilion, patterned after the one at Bomarzo, where the entire façade is a huge face with its mouth agape. That scene, along with others in the apartment, is the work of English artist William Feilding.

Everything here, in fact, was done by hand. "We brought another Englishman, a Frenchman, an Italian, and a Spaniard," says Mahine de Malleray, "and worked with them for two years." As a result, no one would guess that the entire lower floor was once a cellar. "It was a challenge," Pierre de Malleray says, "to cope with this unconventional apartment; it required inspiration to rearrange a house in a hole." Inspiration obviously was abundant, and the result is a most charming creation—a bit of Europe that never was, right in the middle of New York City. □

Editor: Carolyn Sollis





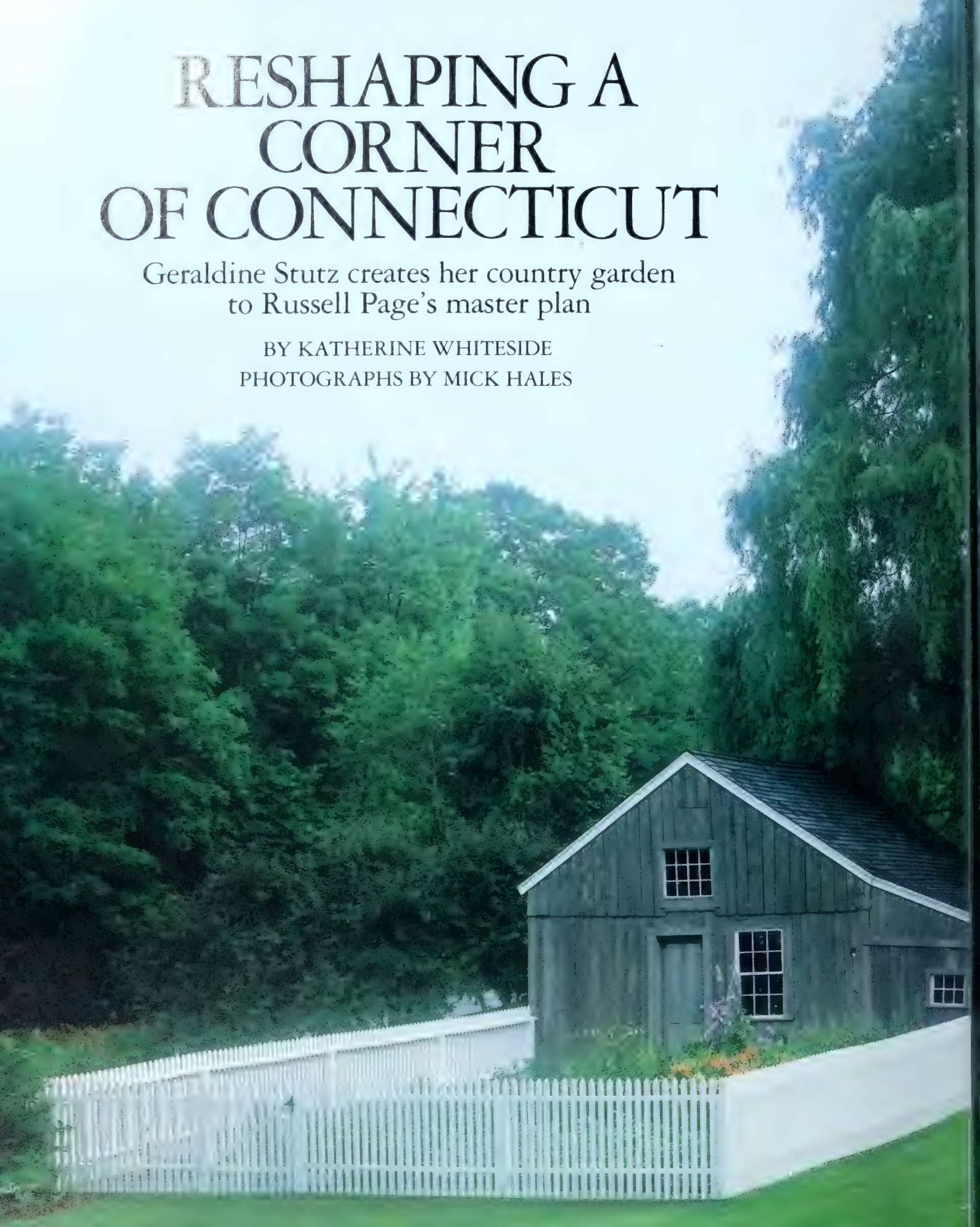
A footman lights the candles for a dinner party in the salon. The table is set with French silver and antique linen, and on the Italian Neoclassical console are Austrian silver serving pieces.

RESHAPING A CORNER OF CONNECTICUT

Geraldine Stutz creates her country garden to Russell Page's master plan

BY KATHERINE WHITESIDE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICK HALES



Trees were cleared to provide a parklike setting for the white border and the very New England garden shed—once a post office—with its picket fence and dooryard cutting garden.









Geraldine Stutz knew that her country property needed a landscaping plan and she knew that Russell Page was the man she wanted to do it. But despite the pleading of a respected mutual friend, Page, then engrossed with the PepsiCo project, was adamant that he was finished with private gardens forever. "No, I am too old and too set in my ways to begin dealing again with *per-son-al-i-ties*."

But the sometimes cantankerous Page underestimated the persuasive qualities of Geraldine Stutz, the former president of Henri Bendel, now a Random House editor with her own imprint. One dreary rainy Saturday morning five years ago, he sat, "polite but remote," in a car driven by Ms. Stutz, on his way to view her twelve Connecticut acres.

She describes that first day with delight: "Russell was very tall, about six and a half feet, and he had a marvelous English face crowned with a wonderful bald dome. He got out of the car and, without having said a word, handed me an umbrella to hold over him." She held her arm straight up for what seemed like hours as Page explored her land. "He sniffed and murmured like a great beagle. Finally he took the umbrella out of my hand, held it miles above my head, and leaned down and kissed me on both cheeks. Then he spoke: 'My dear, you have the perfect combination of deep country and white water. We will make it wonderful.' "

Page then spent six weekends in Connecticut making plans to transform *(Text continued on page 184)*

A broad band of daylilies sweeps up from the river that runs through Geraldine Stutz's garden, *opposite,* and extends a colorful welcome the length of the long entrance drive to the house, *top left. Center:* Russell Page reshaped a hillside to give the existing swimming pool a broad grass platform and banked the slope with a border of white flowers. *Left:* In contrast, the white-fenced cutting garden displays beds of brilliant color.



SECOND NATURE

For a vacation house overlooking the Napa Valley, Ron Mann takes his cues from the rugged setting

BY MARILYN SCHAFER
PHOTOGRAPHS BY HENRY BOWLES





When Ted Connolly and his family selected Ron Mann as designer for Skyhill, their country house above Napa Valley, they found someone obsessed with nature who actively sculpts space with natural materials. Ron Mann immerses himself in each design project, enthusiastically delving into every facet of a job, fitting all the pieces together like a wonderful overscaled jigsaw puzzle. He blends the indoors and out so that they flow seamlessly into each other, and then he adds the important details with drama worthy of the location.

The Connolly domain spills down from a high ridge with a view that seems to encompass Forever. Looking across the 13,000 square feet of redwood deck cantilevering into the horizon, you feel as though you could walk on out into space—to mountains, San Pablo Bay, the Carquinez Straits, and the meandering exit of the Napa River spreading out as far as the eye can see. The Patwin Indians knew this magical place, and a sense of deep serenity pervades it.

The house and ranch buildings have an ideal placement: the ridge rises gently on either side so that the flanking higher hills covered with pine, oak, and Douglas fir become a rich green backdrop for the capacious deck and low rustic house of white stucco and wide redwood board-and-batten siding. Coasting hawks and eagles crisscross the endless blue sky, while more birds carved of wood perch on the deck on top of angled pillars. These are Hintha birds from Southeast Asia, said to be images of the mythical bird Buddha once rode. A grape arbor curves around one side of the swimming pool, which is shaped like a 1950s Noguchi coffee table, and redwood couches with white canvas cushions are islands for sunning and relaxation.

Inside the Connolly house broad-beamed ceilings and a sweep of Mexican handmade terra-cotta tile floor

Beyond an Etruscan urn, a built-in seating area curves around a fireplace. Rough-hewn redwood ladders were designed by Ron Mann.



(with dog paw prints and human footprints personalizing some of the squares) can be traced to early California ranch houses. Blending equally well with the setting are traditional Mexican leather chairs, Chinese bamboo chow tables, and throws and upholstery of shearling, sheepskin, calfskin, as well as natural fibers like chenille-velvet and heavy white linen as thick as Turkish toweling. Undyed linen gauze and finest white percale are used sparingly as diaphanous curtain panels casually looped and knotted over thin steel poles. Adding further texture are stuccoed walls—white in the vast open living room, master bedroom, and study; a rich steel gray in the kitchen, dining room, and lounge; and a curry gold in the rooms upstairs.

The major seating areas are built-in—some are no more than wide steps forming deep benches—and are generously cushioned for comfort. A raised tiled platform centers the living room. The rest of the furniture floats from one place to another, making cozy groups or small islands of privacy.

Ron Mann has created a close-to-primitive grandeur and his few props are so strong that they appear to be rarer than they are. Rustic objects and tools—wagon wheels and ironwood mortars from the Philippines, threshing stones and cog mill wheels from Majorca, oil storage jars from Greece and Morocco, stumps of trees, and the carved redwood-bark ladders designed by Mann—all add interest, cast a mood, and break up the space. Some also serve a very real function as table bases, lamp bases, stools, ashtrays, planters, and even candle holders.

Pillars enchant Mann and they appear in places you might least expect. Steps are another of his favorite devices, used to implement a flowing, open floor plan and to distinguish areas for specific mood or purpose. He thinks in multiples: when things work well—like the small bamboo chow tables, the pigskin chairs from Mexico, the rattan chairs and stools copied from an African design, the storage jars, the sheepskin throws—he uses them again and again, grouping, repeating, bunching so that there is a sense of continuity in both the furniture and the objects. The ambience he achieves is fascinating, welcoming, and, best of all, livable. And, always, it is the outdoor surroundings that set the stage and weave the mood. □



Flexible vertebra lamps by Elio Martinelli illuminate an indoor corner for lounging and conversation. *Opposite:* Boldly scaled, the deck and deep blue swimming pool set the stage for relaxing days and moonlit nights.



Throughout the house are intriguing steps of handmade Mexican tiles, such as in this hallway with primitive wagon wheels angled into place. *Opposite:* A three-posted bed, with thick basketweave linen spread, looks out onto a mountain view.





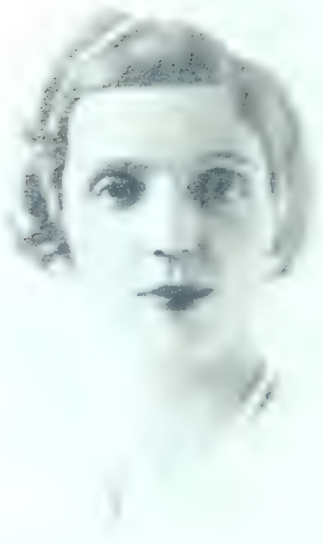
A ROYAL FAMILY HERITAGE

The tragedy and transformation of the Villa Polissena

BY ALVAR GONZALEZ-PALACIOS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY KAREN RADKAI

The garden of the Villa Polissena is shaded by cypresses and umbrella pines. *Right:* The view from the house of the Baroque fountain in the central parterre of the formal garden.





For centuries it was nothing but a humble farmhouse. True, it belonged to a royal estate: the Villa Savoia, which used to be the king of Italy's private residence. But it was not until 1925, when King Victor Emmanuel III gave the property to his daughter Princess Mafalda on the occasion of her marriage to Prince Philip of Hesse, that it came into its own as one of the most beautiful Roman villas. Like his cousin the legendary grand duke of Hesse-Darmstadt —founder of the Mathildenhöhe art colony and a leading patron of Jugendstil and Art Nouveau—Prince Philip turned out to be a man of extraordinary taste, above all in architecture, which he had studied and briefly practiced. Thus he was well equipped to perform the conjuring trick of transforming a neglected

(Text continued on page 172)

In the main living room, a magnificent collection of blue-and-white Chinese porcelain, 15th–18th centuries. *Above:* A portrait of Princess Mafalda, daughter of King Victor Emmanuel III, wife of Prince Philip of Hesse, and mother of Enrico d'Assia.



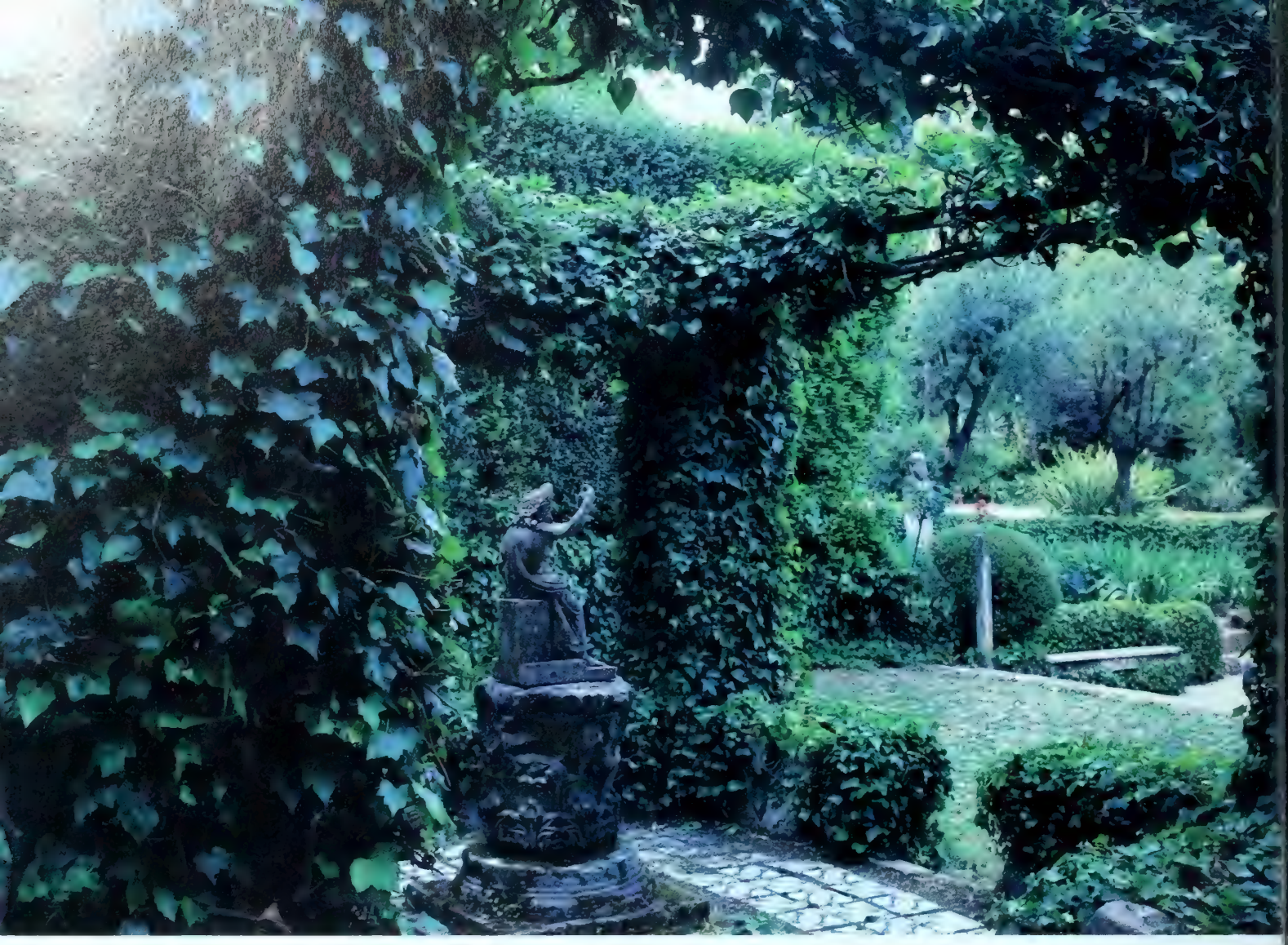






Enrico d'Assia, *far left,* painter and set designer, at work in his study. *Above:* The library, designed by his father, Prince Philip, contains art books, family bibelots, and old master drawings. *Left:* A portrait of Prince Philip. *Right:* A memorial in the garden to Princess Mafalda, who died at Buchenwald.







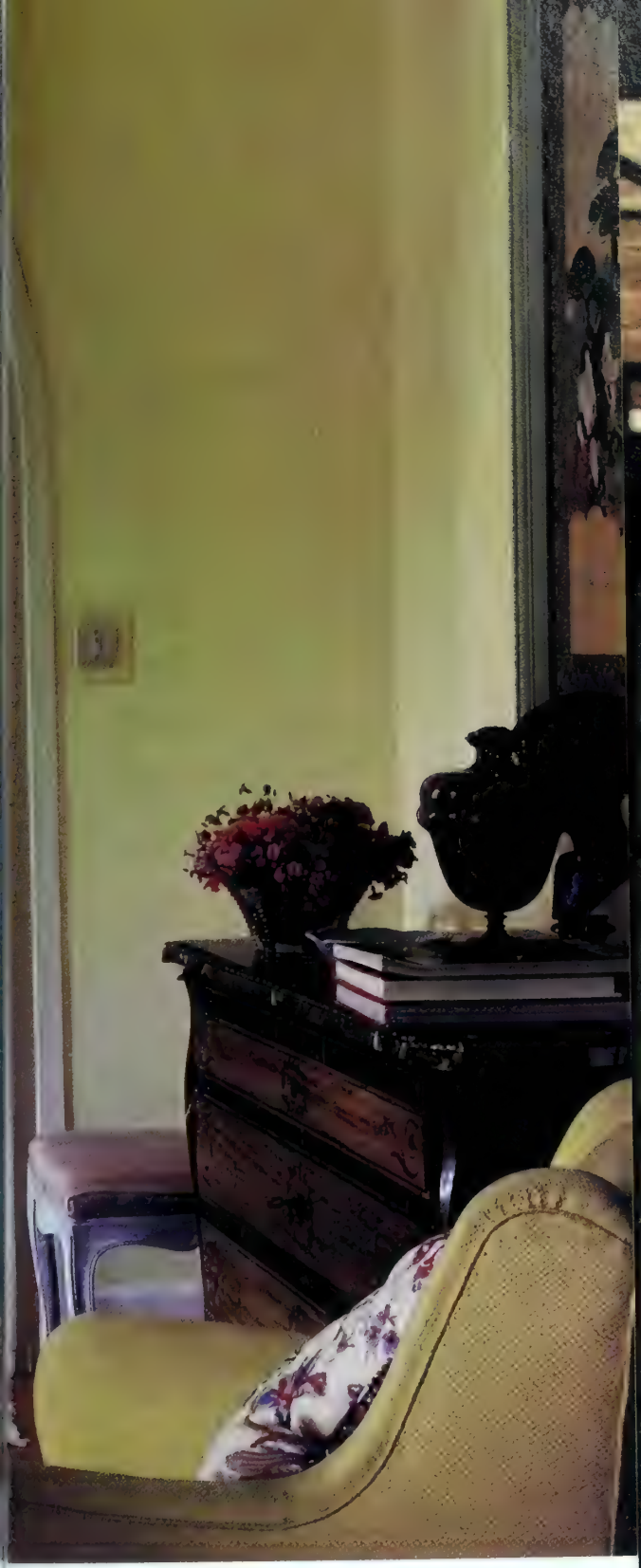
On the dining table, *opposite,* late-19th-century glasses, inscribed with the motto of the house of Savoy, porcelain dishes made in Berlin for a visit of the czar Nicholas II, and silver candlesticks made in England for Queen Victoria's eldest daughter, Prince Philip's grandmother. *Above:* A view into a secluded section of the garden. *Left:* The back of the house.







The bedroom, *above,* of Princess Mafalda and her dressing table, *left,* have been left unchanged since her death in 1944. *Opposite:* View of the Roman statue in the walkway enclosed by hedges.





Continued from page 164 farmhouse into a handsome Neoclassical villa. Such was Prince Philip's tact that today it is hard to tell where the original construction ends and the additions begin.

And what an idyllic setting the villa proved to be for the young Hesses and their two sons—that is, until 1943 when tragedy struck. After the downfall of Mussolini the Nazis exacted a hideous revenge on the Italian royal family: they arrested Princess Mafalda as she returned from a visit to her sister, Queen Giovanna of Bulgaria, and sent her to Buchenwald, where she died in an air raid.

At the same time Prince Philip, who before the war had devoted his energies to reconstituting his ancestral collections in the form of the Landgrafenmuseum in Kassel, saw his life's work destroyed in the bombing. After the war he refused to be discouraged. He started his work of restoration all over again in Germany as well as Italy. This time he turned his attention to another great family palace, Fasanerie outside Kassel, while continuing to embellish the Villa Polissena, where he spent much of his time.

In 1980, Prince Philip died and his eldest son Prince Henry of Hesse, Enrico d'Assia (he prefers the Italian form of his name), inherited the Villa Polissena. And who better than this distinguished artist and stage designer to continue his father's work there. In the space of a few years he has managed to impose his own artistic sensibility and gentle charm on the place, which means so much to him. For it is at the same time a shrine to his mother's memory and a monument to his father's taste.

When I first met Prince Philip, he was well on in years, nearly eighty, and his impeccable manners were as reserved as his few carefully weighed words. You were tempted to think that, like Augustus, before uttering he wrote down even his private remarks to make sure he would not say too much or too little. But this elderly gentleman, whose icy elegance instilled instant deference, would occasionally glow like a crystal struck by light. In the presence of an object that aroused his interest his long fingers would move independently and express, as if on their own, an admiration that was palpable, even if not explicit.

What better example of Prince Philip's discrimination than the ancient mosaic excavated in the royal hunting reserve at Castel Porziano, near Rome, with which he paved the ground-floor drawing room. Dating from the second century A.D., it is composed of simple black and white tesserae and centers on a parrot. To complete the flooring of the room, the prince had the brilliant idea of surrounding this great rectangle with a varicolored puzzle made up of ancient Roman colored marble fragments. And how wonderfully lighthearted it is, this garden border of marbles which contrasts the blood red of *rosso antico,* the purple-streaked white of *pavonazzetto,* the splendid gold of *giallo di Numidia,* and the imposing purple and white of *africano.* The prince also found some delicate eighteenth-century Piedmontese *stucchi* and fragments of paneling which he skillfully combined in such a way as to create an interplay of voids and projections in the sober architecture of this room. Piedmontese and settecento: that was an interesting idea.

He also discovered an old cast of a relief portraying a queen of the house of Savoy who had been a princess of Hesse: Polissena, wife of Charles Emmanuel III (he reigned from 1730 to 1773, but Polissena died in 1735). So the house of the prince and princess, combining the new and the antique, was appropriately called Villa Polissena. Alas, the name was prophetic, for Princess Mafalda died young, like her ancestress.

The drawing room called for an important chimneypiece. After a long search the prince came upon a handsome Roman one of statuary marble sculpted in the style of Piranesi. Unfortunately the frieze was incomplete: two magnificent masks were missing. The prince bought the piece anyway and had the lost masks reproduced in plaster. But a dedicated amateur is often guided by a lucky star. Many years later, strolling along Via del Babuino in Rome, the prince looked in a junk-shop window and spotted the two masks that were missing from the fireplace he had bought in the twenties. Magic? Predestination? Or simply a reward for someone who knew how to wait because he knew how to love?

After the drawing room many other rooms claimed his attention. A small boudoir was covered with Chinese papers painted in the eighteenth century. Here, too, one corner remained unfortunately blank. But the luck of the fireplace's completion did not recur. It was only much later—about twenty years ago—that Prince Philip's son Enrico filled in the missing section himself, thereby completing his father's project.

Decorating sometimes involves infidelity to collecting. This room was not intended to be entirely Chinese; hence the inclusion of a curious mirror, its frame of gilded and silvered wood, the glass supported by an eagle and a dragon. Despite their vaguely exotic look, these animals are not Oriental but heraldic elements in the Borghese coat of arms. No matter: placed against one of the wallpapers, the mirror is most effective, especially since with the exception of a Persian carpet the room contains only European furnishings (large Venetian armchairs known as *pozzetti,* Roman cane chairs, two Italian commodes) and Compagnie des Indes porcelain.

The dining room also needed a focal point. Here the chimneypiece is decorated with an array of Roman marbles, part of the decoration of the Palazzo Torlonia, which once stood in the Piazza Venezia until it was demolished in the last century to make room for the mammoth monument to Victor Emmanuel II. The rescue of this fireplace may perhaps be considered a partial reparation on the part of the royal family for that lapse in taste. Arranged around this charming fireplace—as small and graceful as the one in the drawing room is imposing—is a set of simple gold-and-white chairs of the late eighteenth century, an English mahogany table of the same period, and on the walls delicate gouaches that reproduce the paintings inside the pyramid of Caius Cestius, which very few people have ever seen.

Other rooms contain family mementos: an early-nineteenth-century German cylindrical desk holds miniatures of various members of the house of Hesse. The Fabergé frames, all in enamel, were a present from the last czarina of Russia, Alexandra, born a princess of Hesse; glasses engraved with Fert, the motto of the house of Savoy, are apt to be on the dining table, or

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B U I C K

A ROYAL FAMILY HERITAGE

sometimes a Berlin porcelain dinner service ordered on the occasion of Czar Nicholas II's visit to the castle of Racconigi in Piedmont, the same castle in which Philip and Mafalda were married in 1925.

The collection of master drawings which the prince gave Enrico on his fiftieth birthday hangs on the walls of some of the other rooms. The gift was an invitation to collect, and now the extraordinary group of drawings has been tripled—thanks to Enrico's acumen—in just over five years. Hitherto Enrico had not been a collector but an artist. How sensible of the father to transmit his passion to his son, thereby assuring the collection's survival.

But this was not Philip of Hesse's only collection. After the Landgrafen-museum, which he had created, was destroyed by bombs during World War II, he did not lose heart but withdrew himself into the restoration of Fasanerie, the huge palace just south of Kassel, which had been the residence of the prince-bishops of Fulda. Severely damaged during the war, it was only a great shell, half empty, half in ruins. The transformation of this gigantic complex into a museum open to the public, a place that could house what remained of the family artistic heritage as well as much of the prince's private collection, was an almost desperate enterprise—the dream of a Pygmalion, stubbornly determined to bring an ideal to life.

Creating a museum is an enormously taxing job; resurrecting a princely castle, giving it the elegance of a court and the atmosphere and warmth of a house that would be at the same time private and royal, was even more difficult. And yet this superhuman task was carried out by one man, using his by no means exceptional means. The result is a miracle. Room after room, hall after hall, the palace has been brought back to its former life. With its intermingling of tastes and sensibilities, Fasanerie is a palimpsest written by many scribes, a text compiled by successive generations. Perhaps the secret of decoration and furnishing is simply this: making the contradictions of history seem natural.

Along with his great gift for designing and organizing interior space, the prince was an expert landscape architect. At Villa Polissena he arranged an Italian garden, rich in columns, ornamental busts, and archaeological fragments, suggesting with sober tact the classic formal garden of the past. Another part of the park, on the contrary, boasts a little Pompeian garden where culture does not mar the idyllic quality. Everything is archaeologically correct but without being academic or pedantic. Imagination conceals science. Still farther on, a Japanese garden unfolds around a pool where water lilies float—a charming caprice worthy of a Rococo designer.

It is hard to say in which field the many talents of this erudite and sophisticated man found their greatest expression, given that he also collected magnificent examples of Greek and Roman sculpture, European porcelain, and Oriental art which are now on exhibit at Fasanerie. But there can be no doubt that in the reconstruction of interiors, as witness the rooms of Villa Polissena, Philip of Hesse achieved that lyrical refinement which endows décor with a human dimension and allows works of art to exercise hypnotic power. □

NEW STYLE IN THE OLD SOUTH

(Continued from page 144) book *Five Houses* by and about Anthony Ames. In Thomas L. Schumacher's introduction to the book the Hulse house is described as "recalling the semidetached row house of the Eastern States." He looks upon the gridded wall of the outside stair (the main entrance) as a "ghosted party wall of the semidetached house, complete with empty window holes." Whether such echoes are perceived or not, this important introductory passageway gives a sense of shelter and a promise of spatial excitement to those who climb it. The foyer is small but dramatic: three stories high and opening left and right to the circulation spine of the house. Above the foyer's built-in console table facing the front door, a sheet of etched glass represents part of the main floor plan.

Four major rooms march from front to back in this deep narrow house: on the main floor a living room two stories high, a denlike one-story library, a two-story dining room, and a big one-story kitchen. Occupying the second floor are a living-room balcony and two guest suites. On the third floor: the master bedroom, two baths, an exercise room, study, and dressing room.

One might initially view the plan as a tidy succession of cubelike spaces, but then one notices room walls are not exactly parallel, rectangular rugs do not line up with the floorboards, niche ledges are trapezoids. The architect explains that he has made the grid wall and the garden-side outer wall parallel to each other. Within these flanks he placed the rooms on an axis that is rotated a few degrees off the parallel. Anthony Ames uses such rotation in most of his designs and feels that the tension resulting from the off-ness is visually and psychologically rewarding.

A guest may or may not consciously notice this quirky geometry, but everyone seems to be aware of the stripped-down furnishing style that is also an important part of the house. "How can you be so neat?" a friend asks. Billy Hulse answers that neither he nor Betty likes clutter. "You won't find yesterday's paper here," he adds. But they use their house freely and fully and joyfully, the two of them cooking together, filling the two guest rooms in the house plus another in the pool house, giving frequent parties. Betty Hulse is an ebullient hostess who likes to put a reggae band or a jazz pianist on the balcony, load up the buffet tables, and give a hundred or more guests the run of the place, upstairs, downstairs, inside, outside, poolside. This may be an unusual Southern house, but the hospitality is traditional. □

Editor: Heather Smith MacIsaac

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(Continued from page 102) above an unlikely step-pyramid of a chest of drawers, a fabulous if cumbersome example of furniture inspired by Josef Hoffmann's Wiener Werkstätte. Its pear wood and ebony veneer are inlaid with mother-of-pearl, ebony, and boxtree. The design, reminiscent of a famous Hoffmann chest of drawers, is by Eduard Wimmer, a pupil of the great Koloman Moser. "That's the one piece of furniture in this room that's on loan," Mrs. Lauder says. "When we first arrived and had not yet brought any of our Jugendstil furniture with us, we went digging through the basement of the Museum of Applied Arts and, as a great exception and favor, asked if we could borrow this chest." The Lauders will have to give it up in a few months, when it goes to an exhibition. "But at least we've enjoyed this gorgeous piece for a while."

In the meantime they have found furniture in Vienna and have added to their collection of silver sugar boxes, candlesticks, and bowls. Says Herbert Asenbaum, the Viennese art dealer and provider of much of their new silverware, "The ambassador and his wife have a deep understanding of what is called the Vienna tradition, of early-nineteenth-century Biedermeier and early-twentieth-century Werkstätte, styles that span an entire century but go so well together." The Lauders brought some furniture from their Jugendstil room in New York and, of course, many of their finest drawings. Theirs are certainly the most widely traveled pieces from that period: after the Anschluss of Austria in 1938 candlesticks, nests of tables, Hoffmann silver, and china must have traveled across the Atlantic to art galleries and private homes in the United States. The homecoming to Vienna of the Lauders' treasure trove, though temporary, permits reflections on the troubled history of twentieth-century Europe.

There are more wonderful pieces—candlesticks by Joseph Maria Olbrich, white-and-black-striped Hoffmann coffee cups, an amusing Hoffmann lamp with a serious silver base and a polka-dot glass shade, delicate Hoffmann vases with sprigs of spring flowers. A little aloof and keeping to themselves on an opposite wall are two Picasso drawings, a Matisse, and a Kurt Schwitters assemblage. Watching from an elevated position is the Elie Nadelman bronze *Man in a Top Hat,* on loan from the Museum of Modern Art, a true Uncle Sam from the New World.

The dining room is a different matter altogether: here, one feels, personal touches have been subdued to permit the transaction of official business and the carrying-out of an ambassador's duties. The pleasant room with a view of the garden is watched over by five gentlemen with carefully powdered heads: George Washington by Gilbert Stuart commands the sideboard, while Robert Walsh, Joseph Dugan, Sir John Dick, and a gentleman of the Ashe family look down their noses from the other walls. Here the carefully planned mélange of guests finds its counterpoint in Austro-American menus—no problem for the Lauders' chef, Kevin Ripley, who comes from Austrian Wolfgang Puck's Spago restaurant in L.A. (When the Lauders first arrived, they were assisted by another culinary expert, Anna Pump of Long Island's Loaves & Fishes.) "When we have a mainly American party, then we try to serve Austrian food," says Jo Carole. "Boiled beef, goulash, chicken paprikash, and the typical sweets like *Palatschinken* [pancakes] and sweet dumplings." The Lauders like all kinds of food, she says, and only have trouble deciding what to serve. "It's always the same before a big dinner: I discuss the menu with the chef, and my husband changes it, and then we start all over again."

On average the Lauders have two dinners of twelve to twenty persons every week, and sundry large receptions in between. It is an exhausting program, but it pays off in new ventures: on the arts side, a Jasper Johns exhibit, organized by the Lauders, was held recently at the Secession Building, designed by Olbrich in 1898. Plans for a postgraduate English-language business school are a frequent dinner topic between the Lauders and their Austrian guests, and there was great excitement in town when a combination of guests at a particular dinner seemed to confirm rumors that the American ambassador planned to help found an Austrian newspaper. "Here is an ambassador who knows more Austrians from the business and arts communities than any of his predecessors," says a frequent guest, "and who gets things moving without getting into the gossip columns himself."

Ronald Lauder did get into the papers when he footed a large part of the bill for gilding the Golden Cabbage, the ornate sphere of golden leaves that tops Olbrich's Secession Building. When flabbergasted Austrian journalists asked why, the ambassador had a simple answer: "Because I love that building." There is, of course, more to it than the fascination with a piece of architecture in an otherwise foreign town. Vienna's Lord Mayor Helmut Zilk made the point when he awarded—"to our dear friend Ambassador Lauder"—the city's highest decoration in December: "You have first come to this city 25 years ago, and your enthusiasm is still fresh. Your family comes from such old imperial towns as Budapest and Bratislava. If you don't think it presumptuous, I should like to say that in some ways you are one of us. And as federal governor of Vienna, I can assure you that we could get you an Austrian citizenship in no time at all, and quite without red tape—if you only wanted it."

But should some critics feel that the Lauders have gone completely native, they need only step from the resi-

VEAL GOULASH

2 pounds lean veal shoulder
1 pound yellow onions, minced
2 tablespoons olive oil
¼ cup Hungarian paprika
2 cups veal stock
1½ teaspoons caraway seeds
¼ teaspoon marjoram
1 bay leaf
2 cloves garlic, finely minced
Salt and pepper to taste
1 tablespoon cornstarch
½ cup sour cream
Sour cream for garnish

Trim veal and cut into large cubes. Sauté onions in olive oil until clear. Add veal and sauté. Add paprika and veal stock and stir until blended. Add herbs and garlic to veal mixture. Add salt and pepper to taste. Simmer until tender, approximately 45 minutes to 1 hour. Before serving, blend cornstarch with ½ cup sour cream and add to goulash. Top each serving with a dollop of sour cream and sprinkle with paprika. Traditionally veal goulash is served with spätzle. Serves 6–8. *Recipe courtesy Kevin Ripley, Vienna residence chef.*

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A VIENNA SUCCESS

dence's Jugendstil room to the redecorated guest wing where Jo Carole Lauder, with the aid of decorator Riki Gail Interiors, has created an American folk-art dream. Some years ago the already unspectacular 1931 residence building began to split at the seams, and an unimaginative guest wing was added which could, at best, be called Barracks Modern. But when Jo Carole arrived her artistic eye lit upon the ceiling: "That wooden ceiling looked to me like an American porch, so I decided to do the entire wing in American folk art."

The result was an amazing transformation. There is enough freshness and simplicity in the two bedrooms, kitchen, and sitting room to make one long for a walk in the country. The sitting-room walls are hung with old patchwork quilts in blue, white, and red. Paper decoys, including a very large swan, perch on bookshelves and sideboards. A large easy chair is covered in sturdy blue-and-white-checkered fabric. "To our Austrian friends this looks like the typical dirndl material, but it is really a copy of a Williamsburg print." Above the mantel hang prints of quilt designs; on the mantel stand beautiful old spongeware pitchers. To complete the period piece, guests have their breakfast coffee in copies of the old light blue spatterware cups, and sugar is served in wooden Shaker boxes. While the Jugendstil furniture and the treasures of the morning room will eventually go back to New York, the Lauders will leave these charming folk-art rooms as a legacy for their successors.

Not surprisingly, the ambassador's political ambitions are causing some worry among his many new friends in Vienna. Will he stay the full four years? Will he drop it all after two? After the wine scandal and the financial troubles of the nationalized industries, after the repercussions of the election of Kurt Waldheim to the presidency and a winter without a single gold medal for Austria's male ski idols, it is reassuring, says longtime Lauder fan Fritz Molden, "to have an American ambassador who defends us." And isn't it rare to find a diplomatic couple who loves the very same things many Viennese love: Egon Schiele and the Golden Cabbage, plum dumplings and goulash, folk art and Jugendstil? □

Editor: Carolyn Sollis

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(Continued from page 126) long ago. More recently, a whole collection of icons was acquired from a private collector in London. Surrealist paintings by Max Ernst, René Magritte, Yves Tanguy, Victor Brauner, and others were bought at a time when no one else was after them. Dominique bought heavily into Renaissance books, on a hunch that one day they would be just what she wanted. Works of art from all over and from all periods crowd the house, and somewhere someday every one of them will fit into her grand design. (She also has a very good eye for objects that look like art but aren't, like the ancient wine press in her house, which is often taken for a Brancusi.)

Since I first went there, almost twenty years ago, good works of one kind or another have gradually taken over room after room in what was never a large house. Children are gone, guests have been crowded out or lodged elsewhere, room after room has been turned into a work space in which the concept of office hours has no meaning. But the house is still recognizably what it was when Philip Johnson finished building it and the couturier Charles James finished his additions of color and furnishings some 35 years ago. It was a challenge to Houston then, and it still sets a standard all its own.

When Jean and Dominique de Menil first came to Houston, in the early 1940s, they lived in a pleasant but quite unpretentious two-story house. It was not air-conditioned, but it had a small screened porch and a big yard for the children to play in. The two older children had a Louisianan nanny who spoke a rare and beautiful French, full of eighteenth-century words that had long gone out of use everywhere else. In the summer the still-young couple and their still very young children (soon to number five in all) had informal, lively meals on the screened porch, and Jean de Menil liked to serve a leg of lamb with nutmeg, in contrast to the mint sauce favored by the English.

But the time came when they wanted a house tailor-made to their needs. Houston after World War II was still a relatively small and quite unsophisticated place. No one believed that there would ever again be plenty of servants, and big old houses could be bought for $35,000 because people were terrified of having to keep them up. The Menils didn't want a big old house. They wanted a convenient and beautiful new house. When they asked their friend the sculptor Mary Callery who should design it, she told them that if they wanted a $100,000 house, they should ask Mies van der Rohe and that if they wanted a $75,000 house, they should ask Philip Johnson. (Since Mrs. Callery was an old and intimate friend of Mies van der Rohe, her word carried great weight with the Menils.)

Though by no means poor at the time, the Menils did not think of themselves as rich. "We really couldn't afford $100,000," Dominique de Menil said recently. "So we asked Philip Johnson. And I really think that he did a better job for us because—with all due respect to Mies's genius—Philip was more flexible and understood our problems better." The Johnson design was quite unlike anything that had been seen in Houston, and there were people who told Dominique de Menil that it was a great mistake to build a house with a flat roof. "You'll never be able to sell it," they said. They were also told that River Oaks—the part of Houston in which the house stands—was an association of "No Ranch-Style Houses."

"But we said that we didn't mind about the market because we weren't building the house to sell. As for the roof, no sooner was our house built than you began to see flat roofs everywhere.

"Philip Johnson at that time was very Miesian, and when the house was finished, it was beautiful but very stark. So Jean had the idea that it should be warmed up, and he asked Charlie James to come down and see what could be done about it." Charles James, though famous as a couturier of exceptional refinement, originality, and distinction, had never before been asked to work on a house. "It was a complete novelty for Charlie, and he

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took a perverse pleasure in telling everyone that he was going to transform Philip's house completely and turn it into something like an Arabian palace. He never did that, as a matter of fact. He started from a few simple principles, such as that you should only put color on corridors and inside closets. Dark corners and passages were the places for color. The living room should be kept simple."

Even today Charles James's color combinations are startling. Who else would have covered doors with raspberry felt and painted the walls behind them tobacco color? Or paired scarlet velvet with pale pink or a strawberry pink next to a strong vermilion? Or made all these work in harmony with a collection of Cycladic idols, Etruscan objects, polychrome wood statues of the Madonna, paintings by Dubuffet, Klee, Van Gogh, Redon, Léger—and, as plans for the museum proceeded, with box files and architectural drawings and invoices and balance sheets?

For the real vindication of what the Menils, Philip Johnson, and Charles James among them wrought, now many years ago, is that the house has lent itself so well to its recent function as both a museum in miniature and the intellectual capital of a free republic of the spirit. What it has lost as a family house it has gained as a center of ideas which never quite goes to sleep.

To get it right in the first place took a lot of doing.

"Charlie was impossible, as we soon found out. But all that mattered was that he was a genius. Quite early on, he told me that he couldn't be inspired unless the living-room floor of black tiles was polished till you could see your face in it. Then one day he called us from the airport and said that he had brought a vase from New York that was too big to put in a taxi. Could we send a little truck? So we sent a little truck, and there was this huge vase that had to be filled with white lilac before anything else could be done. So there it was, a white island in all the black.

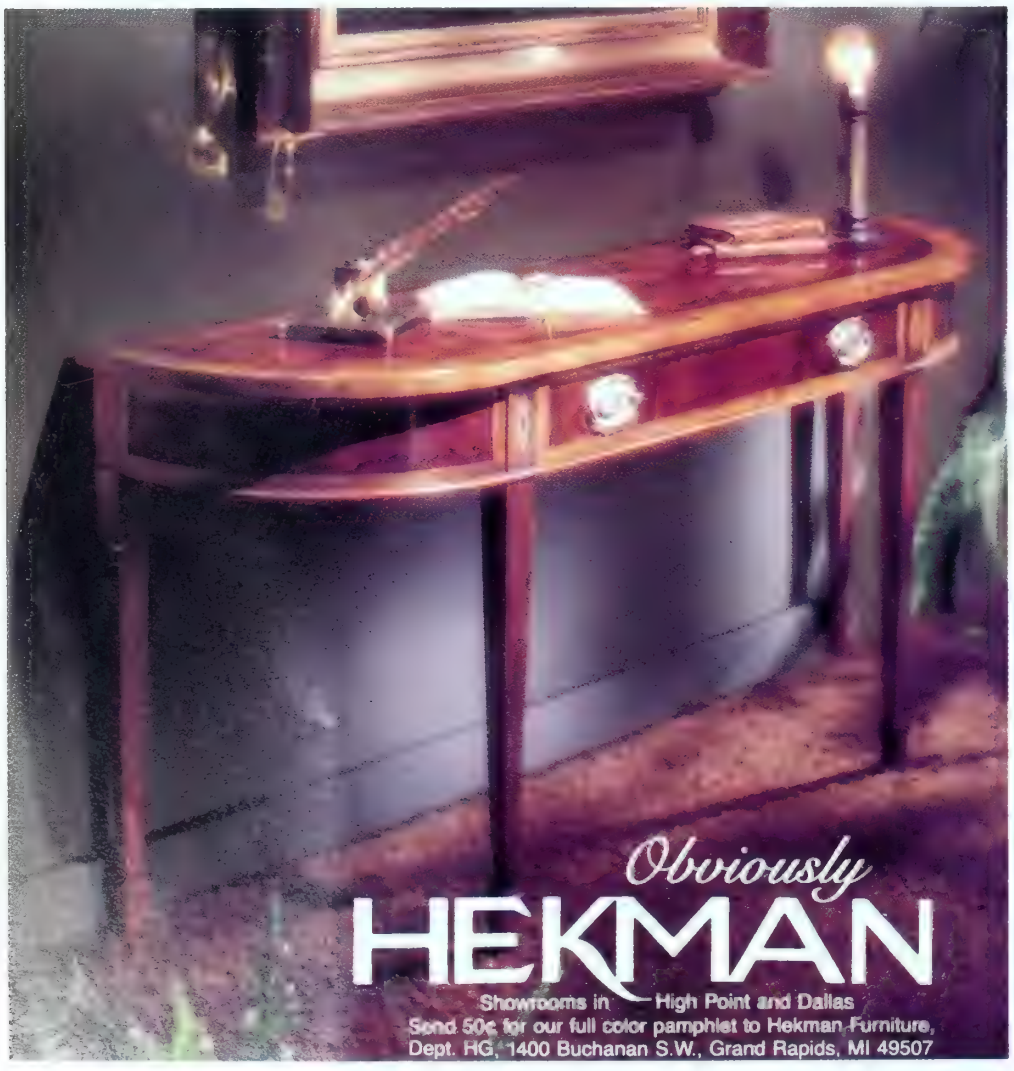
"To get the living room the way he wanted, he had mock-ups of all the furniture made from cardboard and orange boxes. That included the grand piano that now stands underneath the Braque. When we began to move in, Charlie would take anything that got in the way of his vision and push it out of sight under the imitation piano. Whenever I couldn't find something and thought that the movers had lost it, it always turned up in the end somewhere beneath the cardboard piano.

"Charlie would bring the most delicate, the most fastidious Japan colors from New York, and then he'd suddenly say to the painters, 'Oh, let's imitate the color of the cement,' or of the cardboard, and they would be very disconcerted. Then he didn't like to start before noon, which would be just when the painters wanted to have lunch, and then he had appointments downtown and didn't come back till four, when it was time for them to go home, so Charlie and I often ended up painting the walls ourselves by the last glimmer of daylight.

"In fact he drove everyone crazy. We have a high sofa—all curves, no straight lines—that he designed for us. It's like an airplane design, or the bodywork for an automobile. As he couldn't come up with the right mathematical formulas, he had innumerable templates made with strings attached. One very good upholsterer came and then another, and they both gave up in despair. Then a third one came—one that Charlie thought was terrific—and he got so worked up that he said to Charlie, 'If you don't take this thing away, I'll throw it out the window.' But we got it right in the end."

What Charles James did throughout the house has the kind of timeless distinction that his clothes always have had and never lost. When the Menil collection was shown in 1984 at the Grand Palais in Paris, it was predictably a great occasion, with President Mitterrand at Mrs. de Menil's side and the entire French art establishment touching elbows a pace or two behind. Most women would have gone out and bought a new dress for the occasion but not Dominique. A thirty-year-old suit by Charles James seemed just the ticket to her and she wore it—and everyone else looked just a tiny bit dowdy. □

Editor: Elizabeth Sverbeyeff Byron



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RESHAPING A CORNER OF CONNECTICUT

(Continued from page 154) the partially wooded, steeply sloped parcel into a gently rolling English park. When she realized the enormous amount of earth he was preparing to move, she reminded him that he had called the property "a perfect combination. . ." He quickly interrupted, "Oh, yes, it is. But it does require a little patting into shape."

The patting took six months of bulldozers and mud, then six more months to settle. "I was scared to death," she admits. Page interviewed all the workers, hired a stonemason, and generally supervised the project. By the following spring the land gently undulated within wide terraces from the top of the hill down to the river. The house no longer perched on a precipice but nestled into a hillside. "It looked spectacular, just as if it had always been like that. The landscape was polished, and that was Russell's genius."

Page reminded her that after a facelift comes the time to consider maquillage. As she explored her newly created park, she observed that "wherever I was, I could see the whole thing at once. This was not a garden to be viewed in sections, but an all-at-once place. I realized then that anything done in the way of plant material was going to have to be done in huge bold statements."

The daylily border, an extravaganza in orange six feet wide and "at least three blocks long," makes a glorious paean to planting bravura. Several hundred thousand native lilies were required to fill this enormous border, and Ms. Stutz is happy to explain how they were acquired: "A local farmer had a fallow field overgrown with these wonderful flowers, so I decided to pay a visit and make him an offer." The surprised farmer negotiated a price for daylily-collecting rights and, soon after, had a cleared field. The daylily border now creates a warm welcome along the drive for the entire month of July and, although Page was not involved in its creation, serves as the prime example of "what the planting plan for this place is all about."

Other masses of flowers in the park create different effects. The white border, 72 feet long and 15 feet wide, contains snowdrifts of acidantheras, cleomes, iris, and anemones and provides a sea of calm after the excitement of the daylilies. A cutting garden full of big splashes of color is contained within a picket fence like a huge informal flower arrangement in a basket. The prim white fence also contains an abandoned post office, which once served villagers collecting their mail and now serves gardeners storing their tools. The six cutting beds brim with a succession of tulips, peonies, lilies, roses, and a selection of annuals. "We have to plant big or the flowers just disappear. But, let me tell you, when you make a mistake with this sort of gardening, you make a *big* mistake.

"Remember how wonderful the nasturtiums looked at Giverny? I wanted a big border of them along the old post office fence. We planted millions of seeds, and all through May, June, July, and half of August we had a pitiful show of tiny stunted things like pachysandra. Then, in the second part of August, everything exploded. Each nasturtium suddenly decided to audition for the part of Audrey II in *Little Shop of Horrors*. They became enormous with huge round leaves like green billowing suds. The flowers were invisible, completely hidden under the foliage. It was an awful mess."

Geraldine Stutz is a self-assured gardener in her own right, but at the same time she is aware of her role as owner of a Russell Page garden. Hers is one of the very few private gardens accepted by Page in the last years before his death in 1985 and probably one of the last still gardened according to his instructions. Pleading and umbrella holding paid off because "Russell left me a beautifully proportioned property and a ten-year plan. For the past four years I followed his plans step-by-step. We continue to clear, we completed the ponds, and I still have six years of instructions left." She smiles with satisfaction, then adds, "There are always several possible answers to any garden problem, but only one solution that stands the test of time. With each year that passes, Russell's solutions just get righter and righter." □

EARLY AMERICAN PLEASURES

(Continued from page 116) retain the severe Puritan plainness of architecture, the great chimney stack, small windows, and modest entries."

The most significant event in maintaining the old Whipple House was its move in 1927. When Thomas Waters originally discovered the building, it was located among old mills down by the river. Much later, when the area began to deteriorate, the Historical Society decided that a move was prudent. Richard T. Crane Jr. donated a site, and the house was moved to the other side of the river and carefully oriented as it had been before. Today the two and a half story dark-stained structure is located on a corner lot.

Although Ipswich boasts more than fifty other houses predating 1720, none is as Elizabethan in appearance as Whipple House. Mrs. Newton describes its construction as "resembling an English half-timbered house with gunstock posts, wind braces, and a filling of broken bricks and clay." The steeply pitched roof indicates that it may have been originally thatched. Small windows with diamond-shaped panes look out onto a modest front garden planted in the 1950s according to colonial records.

Whipple House together with the Ipswich Historical Society's collection of early American artifacts will be open to the public again this year for its 88th season. As Mrs. Newton guides her visitors around the property, she explains that "this building shows hardly any influence of the New World. It is basically an Elizabethan-style house." Although John Whipple lived in this old-world structure, he became a new-world man. It is his legacy—"typically Ipswich, not rich and elegant but strong and good"—that visitors enjoy today. □

Editor: Babs Simpson

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(Continued from page 93) his own home in a 1970s wood-and-glass California idiom, superficially very different from the work he would do for her, but the same control of crisp, intriguing volumes appears in both.

She met her future landscape designer, Isabelle Greene, when Greene simply appeared at her door one day with an appointment to look at an unusual camellia on the property. Later she had the chance to see a Greene swimming pool, done with such sensitive use of stone and native plants that even close up it seemed to be a natural pond. She resolved that if she ever made another garden, Isabelle Greene would be the landscape architect.

Then, too, the owner brought to the task her own experience of a peripatetic life, spent in London, New York, and around southern California. "I lived in a lot of awful rented houses," she recalls, "so I had very good ideas for this one." It was not a simple matter to realize her ideas. In New York they talk apartments, but on the California coast they talk water. A popular saying is Mark Twain's quip, "Whiskey is for drinking; water is for fighting over." She waited six years just to get the small allotment of district water which would allow her to begin.



In the bedroom, pieces of the owner's extensive ceramics collection.

Nowhere more than in California is design such a question of orientation. What is the slope? Is there a fault nearby? What are the views? How much water is there? What is the fire danger? Against the physical facts plays the inhabitant's temperament. Does she entertain? Does she garden? Has she a predilection for the Orient, the Mediterranean, the Southwest, the East Coast—or for all of them? These are questions anywhere, but they seem urgent in California, not only because of the climate but also because the state for the most part has never developed a rural culture of its own. Beginning with the Gold Rush, settlers brought with them cosmopolitan notions from all over the world. From boom towns to coastal ports the region became instantly urban.

The best California buildings therefore are situations, not statements. The Franciscans learned the California lesson quickly enough: they built their Spanish-style missions beside flowing streams, but by summer the rivers were often dry or, as the saying goes, "flowing bottom side up." At least three of the missions had to move. Later ideas, like the Greene brothers' great post-and-beam houses, influenced by Oriental design, were made as much for how they interacted with nature as for what they looked like. Charles Greene, writing to one recalcitrant client, refused to change the projecting beams on a house plan, "because they cast such beautiful shadows on the sides of the house in this bright atmosphere."

Paul Gray had his work cut out for him. The slope was very severe, and the owner had exacting requirements. She wanted space for entertaining, both indoors and out. She is a keen gardener. Above all, she needed a setting for her stunning collection of modern ceramics and for the antique English furnishings and fine prints and tapestries she would bring from the old house.

The interior, in fact, evolved from two favorite objects that she showed Gray. The first was a large Feraghan carpet, bought by her husband from a collection that had originally belonged to Henry E. Huntington. The second was a lamp on a raku ceramic base circled with streaks and patches of rust red, beige, and deepening shades of blue like some impossible sky. "It never looked right in the old house," she says.

The sitting room coalesced around these two essentials, and the rest of the

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plan followed. To shape the house, the architect used North African village structures as his model. The pure lines and limpid volumes—not softened at the edges, as they would be in the Southwestern Pueblo style—were originally created for steep hillsides in the Atlas Mountains. "The style gives you the opportunity to use thick walls and deep recesses," says Gray, "so you don't have to have big overhangs." But it also let him respond to the client's wishes for discrete yet flexible areas rather than an open plan. "We wanted the feeling of traditional spaces," he recalls, "but with a fresh approach."

High parapet walls at the roof line allowed him to vary the ceiling heights indoors so rooms would be in scale for their functions. The clean lines of the structure made interiors fine for displaying collections. The long interior gallery connecting sitting room and dining room was made wide enough to accommodate tables for large dinner parties. The thick walls allow room for recesses into which the sliding doors disappear, opening the house to two broad outside terraces: one, a kind of private morning room on the east side of the house, faces the rising sun; the other, which wraps around the south façade with a view of the garden and the sea, is well suited for large outdoor gatherings. A concession to the Spanish Revival styles prevalent in the region is the outdoor staircase descending from the south terrace to the garden. Still, in the North African context it looks quite different, its sharp diagonal line seeming to set the rectangular volumes in motion.

A traditional form with a modern look fits the owner's temperament precisely. Her library contains a collection of romantic novels taken from her mother's house—books with titles like *The Rich Mrs. Burgoyne* and *The Story of Julia Page*. She has long considered writing an article comparing these once-steamy reads with today's romances. "In those days," she remembers with amusement, "it was a big moment when the characters finally used each other's first names."

All her collections, except the Havell Audubon prints she and her husband gathered, show the same fascination with old forms in new guises. She became interested in contemporary Japanese prints when she

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volunteered to sell some as part of a church benefit in New York. "I was my own best customer," she laughs. She devised an ingenious framing system so that she could change the prints on the wall simply by slipping one out and another in. Her Navajo rugs are also contemporary designs, but using the muted colors of vegetable, not aniline, dyes. Many of the contemporary tapestries hanging in the house come from the modern incarnation of the Aubusson workshop. Even the group of antique figurines on a shelf in the sitting room is set off by one of Beatrice Wood's loving couples—blue figures in a primitive style—seated on a polished slice of stone.

The most glorious collection is the ceramics, all of the objects modern except for two Chinese vases she inherited from her mother. The shapes of the modern pieces are almost always traditional, not fantastic, yet each has a twist. For instance, John Mason's *Stellar Blue Twisted Square* is a straightforward vase that nonetheless looks like the offspring of a box and a corkscrew. A flat flour-white porcelain dish by Richard DeVore has an irregular hole near the center of an inside surface, a declaration against utility which rivets the piece's form in your memory. The long-necked jars by Beatrice Wood might have been found in an Etruscan dig except for the lustrous glaze resembling the inside of an abalone shell.

Furnishings throughout the house are simple and comfortable, either antiques from the old house or contemporary pieces, most of them designed or chosen by interior designer Rufus Rodgers. In addition there are distinctive pieces by Paul Tuttle—a custom-made sideboard and tripartite table in the dining room. Tuttle, trained at the Art Center School in Los Angeles and at Taliesin West, is a Modernist. What distinguishes him from many of his colleagues is the pleasure he takes in combining engineered forms with craftslike aesthetics. The sideboard is a pure ellipse, suspended from the wall, with two drawers opening from the extremities. Its simplicity and fine lacquer finish make it a natural setting for the antique Dutch tiles the owner asked Tuttle to work into the top. The polished walnut top of the dining table looks strictly traditional, but it is divided into three parts, and the ends of the geometrically arranged black metal legs that support it pierce the wood at its surface.

The garden really begins near the front door where it is marked by a kind of totem, the first large pot the owner acquired back in 1972. A modern piece by Philip Cornelius, it is based on blue-and-white Chinese ceramics, but the pattern on the surface shows lizards, dozens of them, not unlike the fence swifts that run all over the garden. "I love lizards," she says. "I'm convinced they eat up all kinds of harmful insects." The same informed but amused regard for the nature of the place marks the whole garden.

Isabelle Greene shared the owner's feeling, but when she first saw the house, she was taken aback. "I knew right away I had to find a way to hop out of the geometry," she says. Her client's wish for something like a Zen garden in the forecourt pointed the way. The trouble was that they would not, as Greene thought, "have enough water to float a pussy paw," so she resolved to express the Zen virtues of harmony in contrast using drought-tolerant plantings. The only evidence of water is a small recirculating pond, based on the owner's memories of a spring in the High Sierra near Mammoth Lakes. The delicate power of the small space, however, comes from daring interplanting. The trunks of specimen sweetshade trees play off similar groupings of the slenderer stems of horsetails and papyrus. At ground level the trees nest in a mound of tiny-leaved baby's-tears, and these are backed up against the big spoon-leaved rosettes of an apple-green succulent.

Around the northwest corner of the house the garden dries still more. A waterless stream of gray gravel, bordered with beige gravel, starts a motif that carries along the side of the house and down to the garden beds beneath where it continues in the form of small slate slabs that cut roughly across the garden's axis. Greene chose local boulders and placed them strategically along the stream, planting their hol-



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lows with small succulents.

Designing the fifth of an acre below the south terrace was a greater challenge. "The land sloped too steeply away from view," says Greene. "I wanted to tip it up." Still, she needed to work with quasi-natural shapes and produce a garden frame that would look right when seen from the podium above. She went to her images file, a folder of a few selected clippings she consults like an oracle: "I look and I wait for *it* to germinate in my mind. It's exhilarating when it does, because I'm not just imitating an idea. Something's being born at that moment."

What she came away with in this case has made the garden among her favorites of the more than three hundred she has designed. There were three images she drew from: rice paddies in Southeast Asia, terrace farms in Lebanon, and a view of strips of Midwestern farmland from the air. With the help of a contractor who figured out how to pour concrete in the sinuous shapes she wanted—adding a lovely texture to their face by pouring the slurry behind irregular cedar shakes—she created a miniature terraced field, formal enough to live with the house, natural enough to counter its strict geometry. "Before we planted the beds," recalls the owner, "we had a hard rain and the terraces filled with water. They really did look like rice paddies!"

Greene's planting plan for the eastern section of terraces mixes gray and blue gray ground covers—snow-in-summer and *Senecio serpens* among them—using agave, yucca, and aloe for accents. Drought-tolerant succulents are found all over the garden, even in the cracks between the stone of the stairs where little aeoniums cluster. "They look like sea anemones, don't they?" she says. The narrow green strip along the lower wall of the property looks like lawn. It isn't. It's *Sedum brevifolium*.

The other section of terraces combines Greene's plant choices with the owner's own. Her client had wanted a bed for fragrant roses, an idea Greene has come to love. Other beds change with the seasons, filling with flowers and vegetables according to Greene's plan. "Even when they're bare," says the owner, "they're wonderful. I just rake a pattern in them." The entire garden, as well as the exterior of the house, takes on a new life come evening, thanks to the subtle lighting provided by Frank Burnaby & Associates.

Coincidentally the kind of terrace farming from which Greene drew her inspiration for softening the arid landscape is also practiced near the very North African villages from which Gray took his models. Too much can be made of coincidences, but it is unlikely that this remarkable environment would have been created without such happy accidents and the cooperation of Gray, Greene, and the owner—three prodigious Californians.

Gray stands looking out from the house terrace. "When the sun is going down and you watch the shadows come across the garden with the sea in the background," he says, "it puts the whole thing together." □

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(Continued from page 139) to wall by a Braquenié rug of small flower patterns against a red background. Opposite the imposing nineteenth-century bronze horse by Gavrard, a marvelous gift from Hélène Rochas to her son François, the screen opening onto the small drawing room is entirely covered with drawings. Over the Second Empire display table, a watercolor by François Louis Schmied entitled *The Casbah of Moulay Israel* continues the Oriental theme we find in the coffee table from India—a nineteenth-century elephant saddle—and also in the large bronze parrot by the Swiss sculptor Édouard Marcel Sandoz, the Japanese bronze monkey, and the arabesques of white-and-pink orchids. Everything works together even though there are startling contrasts: the Russian chairs and the little red-chalk drawing by Watteau in its marble frame; the vast flower-strewn English couch and the ebony Louis XIII cabinet inlaid with marble and surmounted by eighteenth-century Imari porcelain.

In the second and larger part of the living room, a similar cozy atmosphere reigns amid the proliferation of heterogeneous objects. And here a bestiary of bronze animals seems to keep a benevolent watch over the home: on the nineteenth-century Biedermeier console stands an elephant; farther on, beyond the bronze birds of the winter garden, among the palms, we see a nineteenth-century doe; while on the Louis XVI mantelpiece a Leverrier lion appears to be pacing back and forth between the two Directoire candlesticks.

The kilim-covered chairs are particularly successful in their tones, but what really holds one's attention is the nineteenth-century chaise longue covered in blue-striped silk by Madeleine Castaing. It immediately invites one to sit down, even to lie back for a moment, if only to admire the delightful 1787 pedestal table by Bernard Molitor given to the marquise de Vallière by Marie Antoinette. Here Carole has arranged her collection of bronze Japanese vases, ebony and ivory hearts, and a Limoges porcelain elephant. The pictures in the room also contribute to the mixture of styles yet complement one another admirably. Above the sofa covered in red damask and antique cashmeres is a large nineteenth-century painting, found at the auction house Hôtel Drouot, which shows Lucrezia Borgia visiting the pope. Hanging over one end of the mahogany Louis XIV banquette is a painting of some leading citizens of Venice by Benjamin Constant, the late-nineteenth-century English artist and writer.

Yellows and reds have predominated so far, but now we go down a short hallway hung with family photos—a hodgepodge, Carole says—and come out into a fairyland of blue, beige, and pink. This is the master bedroom where large bay windows look out onto another piece of green-filled terrace. Freshness and intimacy prevail in a new mixture of styles. Cotton prints by Braquenié cover everything from floor to ceiling, including the nineteenth-century English canopy bed. And the only white, of the embroidered bed linen from Porthault, is picked up by the more nuanced white of the amaryllis outside. On the pedestal table covered with a nineteenth-century tapestry of embroidered cotton, souvenirs and photographs jostle one another next to several books testifying to a special love of words, among them Boni de Castellane's *Mémoires* and Patrick Süskind's *Le Parfum*. And to the right of the bed a luminous drawing by Magritte assumes the appearance of a precious stone beneath the companionable gaze of Pauline and Nicolas, as immortalized by an Argentine painter and friend.

"He has promised to send me my own portrait very soon—he has been working on it for several months now," says Carole Rochas as we walk back through the apartment toward the dining room. This is a favorite room—the walls covered in a stencil-printed fabric by a pupil of Renzo Mongiardino and enhanced by a suite of Diego Giacometti furniture: lion's-head chairs and a console with cypresses. Here is where Carole and François regale their friends with feasts they like to concoct themselves.

"We adore working in the kitchen, and we each make our own specialties—hot oysters in buttered paper, a sea urchin soufflé, truffled pheasant with foie gras." She continues, "I'm not sure I'll do it, but lately I've been thinking it would be fun to give exotic dinners, maybe hire an Indian or Chinese chef for the evening."

And, indeed, in this setting the exotic would seem perfectly natural. □

Editor: Mary-Sargent Ladd
Translated by Lydia Davis

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STYLISH EASE Page 82: Covered wicker chaise, Lord & Taylor. Pages 86–87: Fabrics on sofas and chairs, Donghia Textiles. Page 88: Fabric on chairs and table, Clarence House.

A VIENNA SUCCESS Page 100: Austrian sweets and pastries from Demel, Vienna. Page 101: Biedermeier flower china from Augarten, Vienna. Biedermeier pitcher and carafe from Lobmeyr, Vienna. Silver candlesticks, beaker, saltcellars, plates from Herbert Asenbaum, Vienna. Page 102: Empire silver teapot, black-and-white demitasse designed by Josef Hoffmann, and sugar box from Herbert Asenbaum, Vienna. Flatware designed by Josef Hoffmann from Albertina Gallery, Vienna. Page 103: Empire silver tray, Art Deco sugar box, Biedermeier silver bowl, Empire silver beaker, and oval table designed by Koloman Moser, all from Herbert Asenbaum, Vienna. Teacups by Dagobert Peche and flatware designed by Josef Hoffmann from Albertina Gallery, Vienna. Silver lamp designed by Josef Hoffmann from Galerie Metropol, Vienna. Pages 104–05: 19th-century quilts and spongeware pitchers from Thos. K. Woodard. Blue-and-white-checkered fabric, Brunschwig & Fils.

PARISIAN EXOTIC Pages 132–33: Floral carpet, quilted curtain fabric, and cornice frieze, Braquenié. Yellow damask wall covering, Casals. Page 135: Blue-striped fabric, Madeleine Castaing. Pages 138–39: Fabrics for curtains, canopy, chairs, and quilted bedspread, Braquenié. Embroidered bed linen, Porthault.

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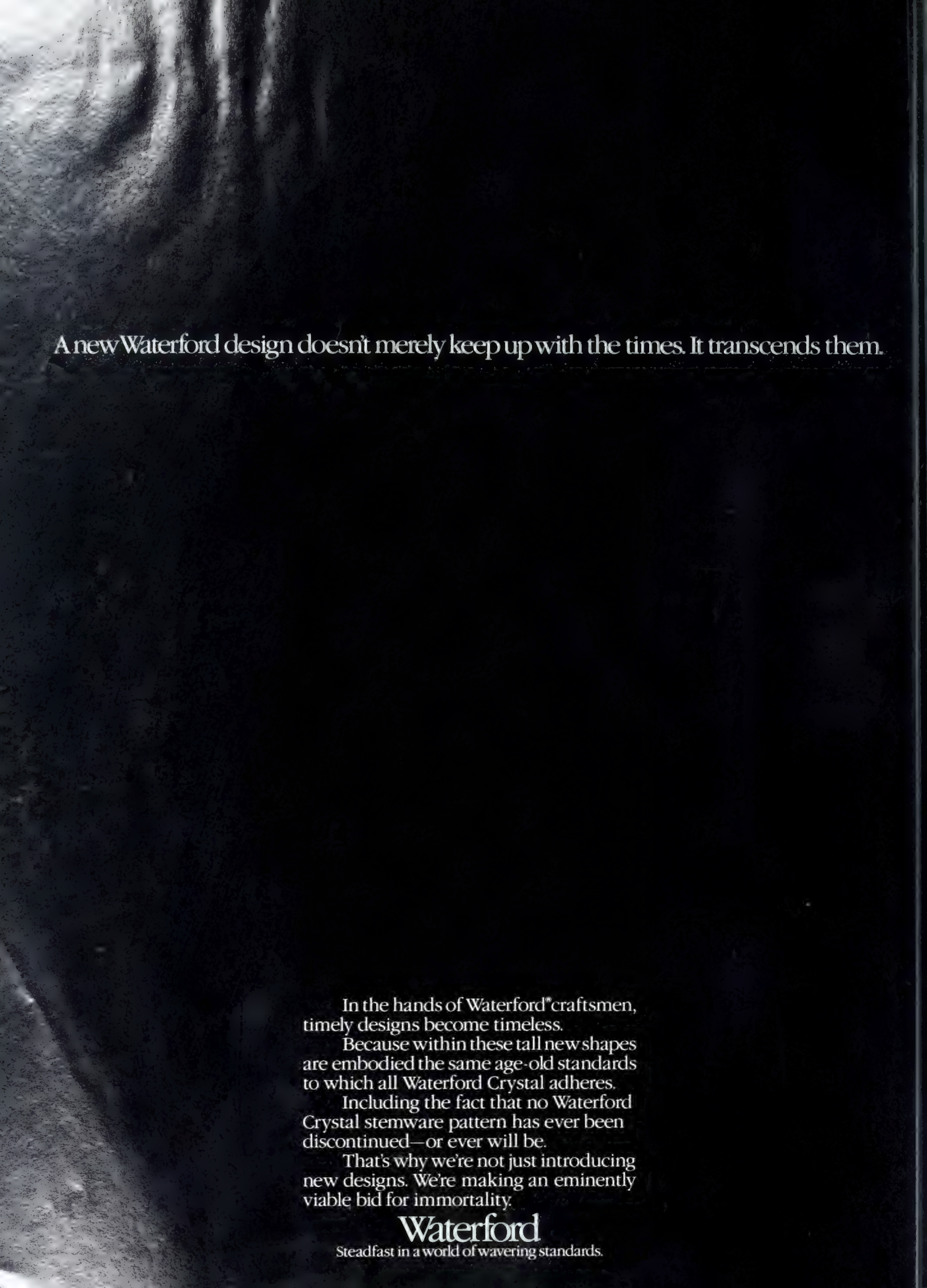
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HOUSE & GARDEN is published by The Condé Nast Publications Inc.
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ROCHE-BOBOIS
PARIS

Without question one of the most frequently read and universally relished books at our house is a mock House & Garden featuring life as it is lived at our summer house in Quogue, a little beach town out near the end of Long Island. The book was created by our friend Alice Austin, who, over the months the house was being built and then moved into, had been unobtrusively photographing it all. The following Christmas it was our favorite present, and each year hence, new chapters have been under the tree to remind us of the slower-paced summer days we're in the midst of right now—there will be Friskie, our cat, captured snoozing on her back in the sun; the girls pumping up the tires on their bikes to head for the beach; Jane working in her flower garden; me showing my mother—who wanted a tree for Mother's Day this year—our latest botanical treasure.



One of the pleasures of summer photographed by Curt Richter.

One year's edition focused on life at the beach: beautiful still lifes of driftwood and sand and less beautiful but endearing photographs of all of us at the traditional Fourth of July cookout or watching a sunset over the bay or taking an early spring nap on the sun-lapped sand. Another chapter is full of pictures of our favorite people, the kind you invite for a weekend; another records the unsettling settling in of other new houses near ours which had stood alone for a while in its woods; and still another includes happier vignettes of the second houses found by friends while visiting us, including the one Alice eventually found for herself.

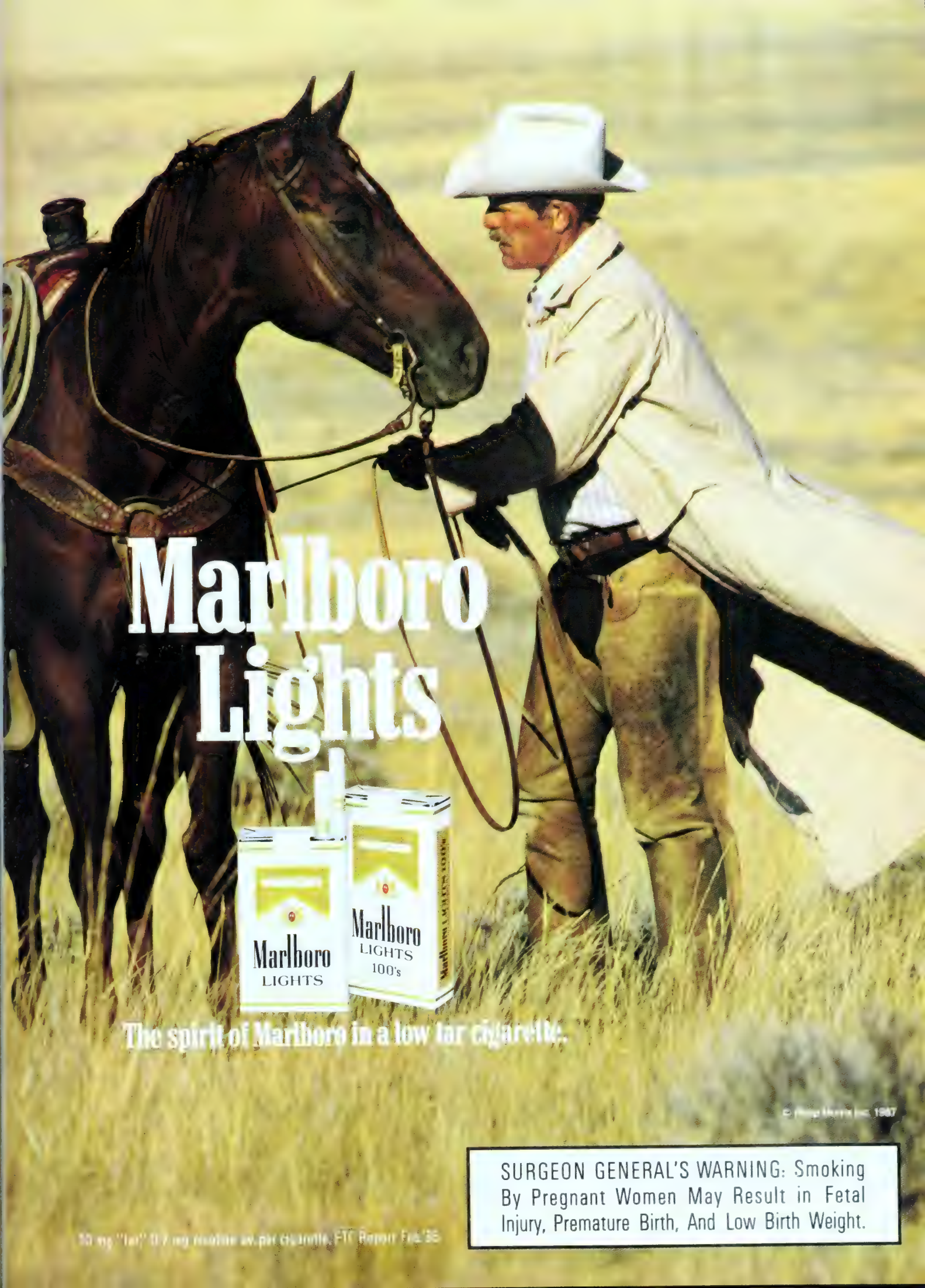
The Alice Austen in this month's issue is not our friend (who spells her name with an "i"), but she is also a photographer and she, too, recorded a special period in time which centered around a house near the water. Yet she did it one hundred years ago. One of the most talented American photographers of her day, she started taking pictures of her family and friends in and around the elegant Victorian "cottage" on Staten Island where she grew up and was to spend most of her life. The Alice Austen House is restored today and looks pretty much the way it did a hundred years ago—except now the view from the front porch, see page 94, includes the giant Verrazano-Narrows Bridge. Alice Austen's family house is now a park and registered landmark, and if you visit it, you will see life as she lived it in the Austen photographs that "furnish" the interiors.

And so this month we are devoting the pages of House & Garden to the pleasures of summer as captured by the successors to Alice Austen. Beginning on this page with the evocative summer scene by Curt Richter, we go on to Peter Margonelli's garden photographs on page 68; John Hall's documentation of a beautifully simple Nantucket house, page 78; Kari Haavisto's photographs excerpted from a new book by former House & Garden editor Elizabeth Gaynor, page 86. You will also see Mick Hales's shoot of a painter's house and garden, page 100, and on and on finally to Oberto Gili's crisp coverage of Ferdinando Scarfiotti's California house, page 140, and Karen Radkai's handsome photographs of Peter Glenville's amazing house and garden in Mexico, page 146.

It's all about photographs and homes and people. As our daughter Lauren said as we drove in from Quogue the other day, "Every family needs an Alice."

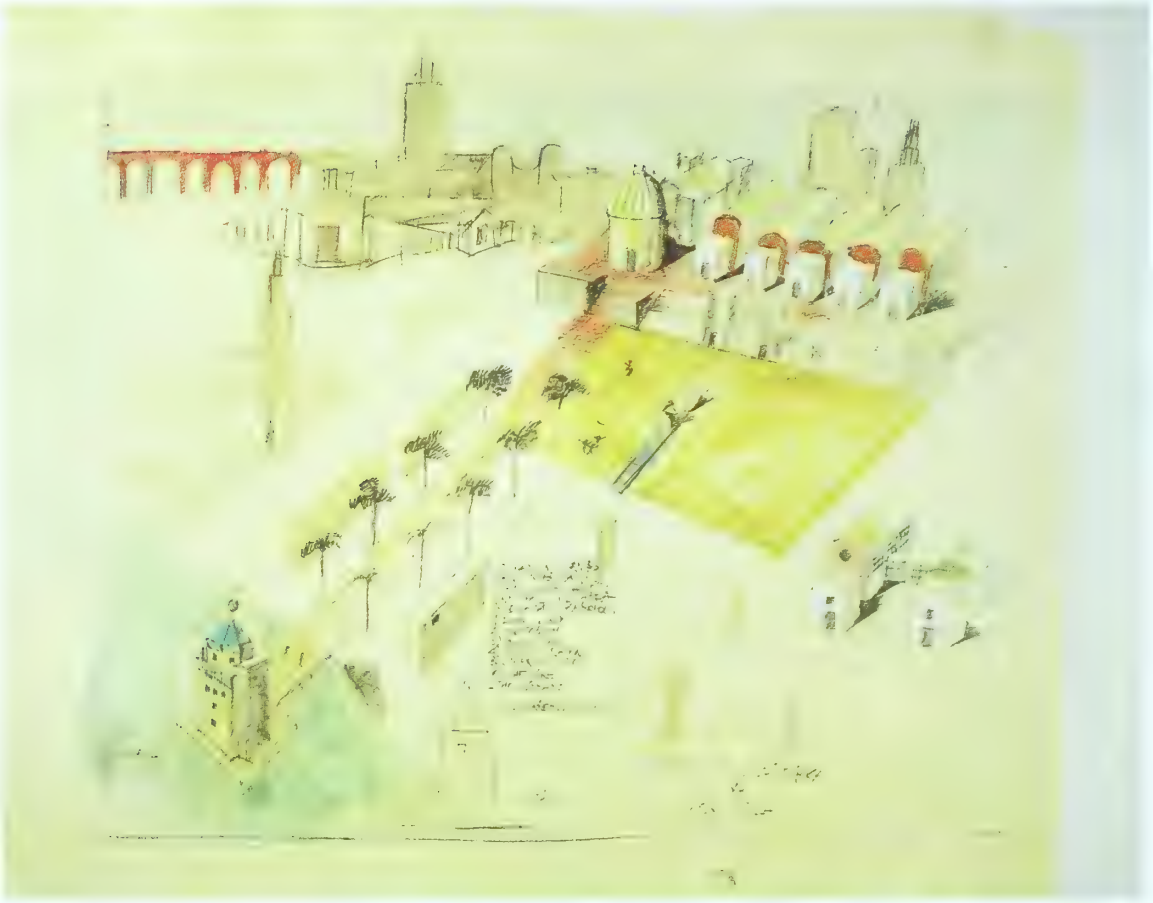
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JOURNAL

On the arts scene



BRAVO ALDO

Although he has built little, the Italian architect Aldo Rossi has won international fame through his evocative renderings of post-Classical buildings with a profound air of civic dignity in poignant defiance of the daunting limitations of modern urban life. Now comes his first chance to construct in the U.S. His new Architecture School for the University of Miami in Coral Gables, *left,* shows that his age-old Mediterranean vocabulary is close to that of south Florida, but it remains totally free of stylistic sentiment or regional nostalgia.

Martin Filler

HEART OF THE HAGUE

Le Corbusier is his major source, but Richard Meier must have also been looking at the pristine visions of the De Stijl movement when he drew up his plans for a new city hall, *right,* for the Dutch capital. Construction will start in 1990. *M.F.*



HE HAD RHYTHM

The music of George Gershwin (seen, *right,* in a 1927 portrait by Edward Steichen for *Vanity Fair*) will live forever. It has to. It's perfect. To mark the 50th anniversary of Gershwin's death, PBS is airing *George Gershwin Remembered,* a 90-minute documentary filled with interviews with friends, family, and performers of his work. Film clips illustrate the range of his accomplishments as a composer of songs, musicals, film scores, concertos, and opera, and home movies show Gershwin at work and play in a madcap New York and Hollywood. The man remains a mystery—not even his close friends had a clue about what he was really like. One thing remains certain: the possibility of many great songs was lost when he died at age 38. On *American Masters,* August 24, PBS. *Gabrielle Winkel*



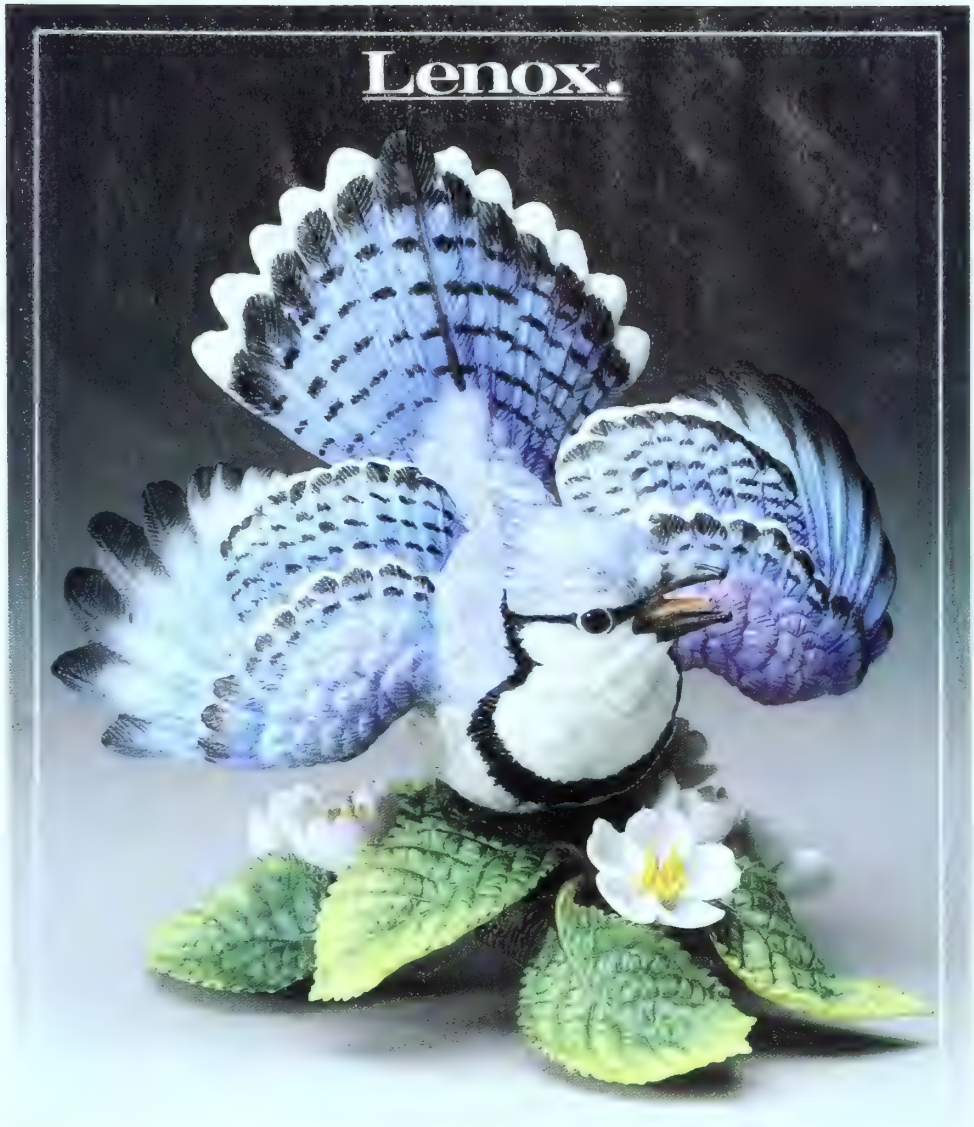
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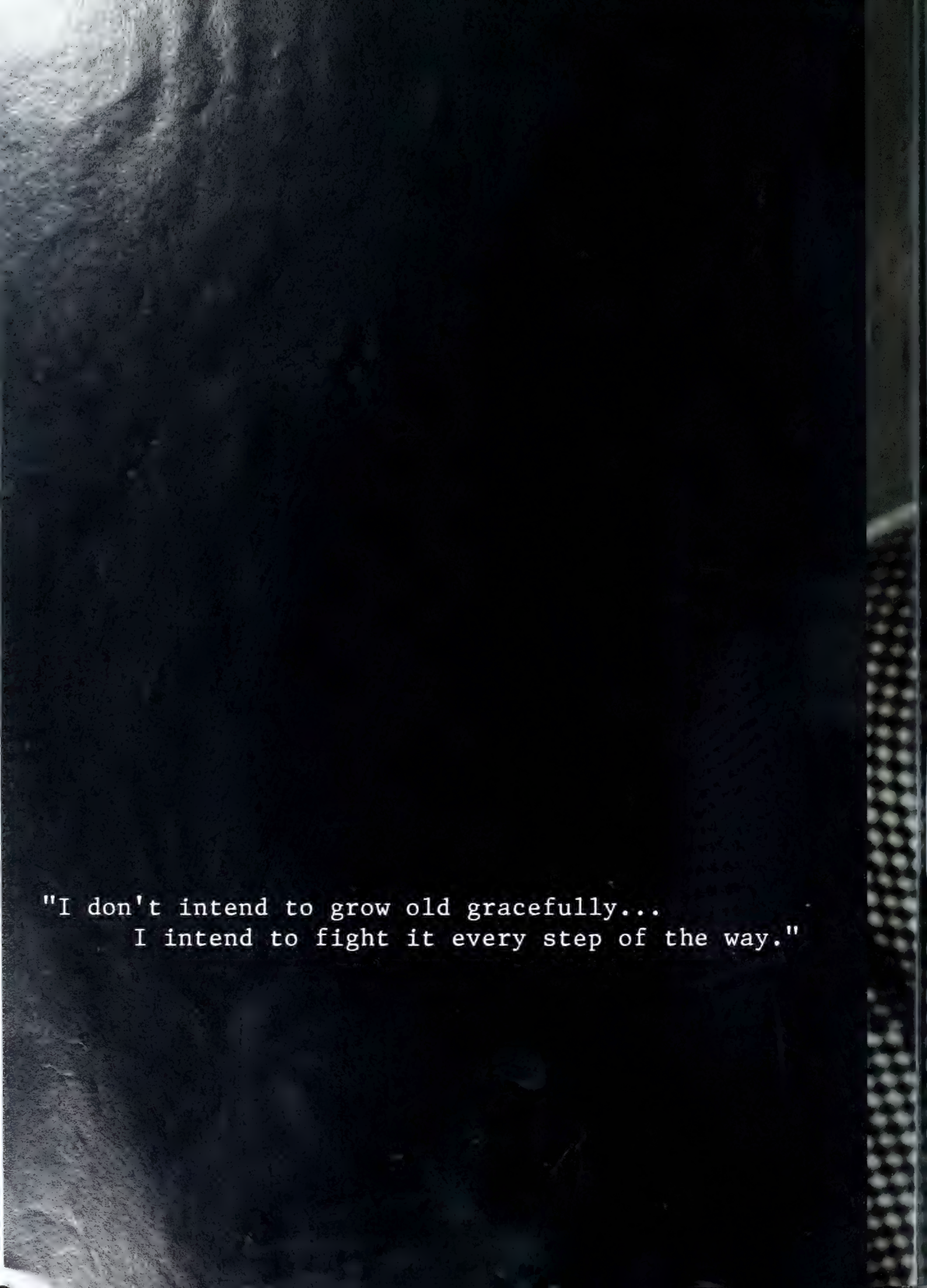
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Making the guest room one of the joys of summer

By Mark Hampton

Before I encountered the seductive luxuries of Porthault linens and the coffee tray brought by the maid who comes to open the shutters, my favorite guest room in the world was my Aunt Edith's sleeping porch in northern Indiana with its six iron bedsteads and its ancient bedding (freezing cold when you got in but terribly comfortable) and its aroma of pine trees coming through the screens. There was a distant view of a lake beyond, and to a landlocked Middle Westerner that lake held all the exciting promise of the Mediterranean Sea. Those August weekends of forty years ago have provided me with perfect summer memories (with the exception of a particularly awful incident involving a purple crayon I applied to a newly slipcovered sofa) of picnics around fires on the beach, corn on the cob at least once a day, and staying up till all hours on hot nights.

Central to all this nostalgia, however, is the house and how I loved staying in it. The total effect of my aunt's welcoming disposition was marvelous to me. This intangible, enormously important aspect of hospitality seems to be inborn. People who are temperamentally ill suited to receiving overnight guests can inflict untold miseries on their hapless victims, and we all learn to avoid invitations to spend a night or two in houses where the atmosphere resembles some kind of Dickensian orphanage. But oh, the fun of arriving at a house and feeling the immediate spark which tells you that you are going to have a good time and you are going to be comfortable. Let's forget about trying to analyze that spirit of playful generosity so vital to the emanation of real hospitality. It would be too difficult and abstract. Let us dwell, instead, on the material side of things, which after all reflects something of the personalities of the hosts and hostesses we all love and adore.

Guest rooms are different from all other decorating efforts because while they inevitably reflect the taste of their owners, they are created for others to use. Therefore one cannot say about his or her guest room, "I like it, so the hell with it." Guest rooms must give instant pleasure to many people. There are guest rooms in all sizes and colors, grand or modest, old-fashioned or modern. Whatever they are, however, they should be welcoming. It should be a pleasure to close the door and make oneself temporarily at home.

Consider grand guest rooms. One thing they should not be is intimidating. Grandeur should be fun. For years, before the house was sold, we used to stay near Oxford with friends who had a variety of guest rooms ranging from small and cluttered to large and airy, the latter used primarily in the summer. The best one of all was in the main part of the house directly at the top of a flight of broad stairs. It is always pleasant when the guest room is easy to reach and doesn't involve what feels like an invasion of the most private precincts of the house. This heavenly room was tall and rather stately, to use that corny word, with handsome plain paneling painted shades of cream color and the moldings carefully picked out in white. The rest of the colors were warm and rosy—creamy peach, reds, and aubergine. The main event of the room was an enormous canopy bed with a domed top, which was marvelous to look at from both outside and inside. It was beautiful and fun at the same time. The comfort of this room reached its peak in the bathrooms and dressing rooms—plural—one for the woman and one for the man. I've



A writing table is a great convenience in a guest room and it gives the host a place to put a few books, a bowl of fruit, a very good light.

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seen a number of guesthouses and guest suites with little sitting rooms that do not seem to be heavily used, but double dressing rooms and baths are very useful and incredibly luxurious.

Another guest room memorable for its terrific glamour was in the little house in the south of France called Le Clos Fiorentina, where Rory Cameron lived first in the forties when he was remodeling La Fiorentina, that legendary Palladian house overlooking the Mediterranean, and later in the seventies after the big house had been sold.

Le Clos was a simple house filled with the fascinating variety of beautiful things that characterized all of Rory Cameron's houses. A great deal of the furniture had found its way there after having been in more imposing surroundings, and the guest room, looking out across a vine-covered terrace to a view of the sea, was furnished with a suite of elaborate mirrored furniture made in Paris in the twenties. There were bedside tables, a dressing table, and even a semainier totally covered in beveled mirror. The bed was draped in a sheer gauzy material and the floor was covered in the very fine straw matting sewn together with linen threads that is made in the south of France and is the prettiest summer floor possible. It is also expensive and doesn't last very long, so it is not tops on the list of helpful hints for thrifty homemakers. The movie-star quality of this room was perfectly suitable to the way the house was run and to its location on one of the most chic stretches of seashore on earth. It was unpretentious and just happened to have a lot of witty furniture used in a subtle tongue-in-cheek way.

If you think of your guest room as part of the whole process of entertaining your guests, then why not be a little whimsical. A house I adore to visit has a stupendous guest room that was, before a siege of remodeling a few years ago, the master bedroom. It is elliptical in the first place, and of all the neglected architectural forms of the past nothing is lovelier than an oval room.

As you approach the room down its little passageway, the first thing you see is an old fireplace, which in the wintertime always has a fire flickering away in it. The next big treat in store is the bed itself, a chinoiserie four-poster extravaganza with a pagoda top. When you are in this great bed, you look out of the big French windows to a view of lawn, elm trees (the loveliest of all endangered species of anything, as far as I'm concerned), and acres and acres of rolling New York farmland. It has always occurred to me, while staying in these perfect surroundings, that when remodeling, it makes great sense to convert the master bedroom into a really good guest room and then start all over with a new master suite.

Summer house guest rooms, rooms that often have little or no cold weather use, are loaded with opportunities for easy and even economical decorating. (I sometimes wonder if there are any easy and economical areas of interior decoration left in the world.) A hodgepodge of leftover furniture can be easily and simply painted—either a color or white—and made to go together in an offhand way that is very appealing.

I remember a favorite example in a Southampton house that was furnished with a lot of typical bedroom furniture all of which had been painted a soft medium tone of green and then pinstriped in white. The floor was painted white and covered with a cotton rug, which is the most comfortable thing of all under bare feet. Watercolors and prints with pale mats and painted frames hung all around the room, and everything—curtains, dust ruffles, and furniture—was made up in the same pink-and-green printed cotton. Painting all the furniture to match and using a single material had the effect of unifying a lot of disparate, maybe even cast-off, stuff. The result was charming and comfortable because nothing was missing. By that, I mean there was a place for everything you might travel with, and all the utilitarian furniture without which a guest room can be irksome was there.

The most indispensable piece of furniture that is frequently omitted from guest rooms is a writing table. Not to be able to sit down and do a little desk work is maddening. It is exactly the sort of work you cannot do in a room where other people are sitting, nor do



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you want to use someone else's desk. In a guest room, however, what is nicer than a table that invites you to sit down, even open the drawers in search of a piece of paper or a pencil, and, as the country saying goes, make yourself at home? This important piece of furniture is also the place where the host can put the books selected for the weekend visitor if the room is too small for a bookcase and where, as in the illustration, a bowl of fruit and some writing implements can be added.

My favorite book story involves a famous European chatelaine who had rented her house to an equally famous American. The owner of the house called a friend of mine in London frantically asking whether or not her imminent tenant's maid was French. What difference does it make, said my friend, whereupon this legendary paragon of housekeeping replied, "I'm selecting the books for the maid's room."

Entertaining weekend guests offers myriad ways to pamper your friends. The bathroom with its full-length mirror, its outlet for curlers and hair dryers, and its well-stocked medicine cabinet seems perfectly obvious. It can be a huge relief to find a sewing kit or a clothes steamer when emergencies arise. A welcoming kitchen with a generously stocked refrigerator is appreciated, too, provided you don't slip up and eat the next day's lunch, as I once did to my horror. (Imagine the horror of my hostess!) My wife's pet peeve is not being able to sleep on the pillow that is provided, so she travels with her own. Who invented foam rubber pillows anyway? Guest beds should be equipped with one soft, one firm, and one baby pillow for every person who is supposed to sleep in that bed.

The pivotal quality that makes any house a delight to visit is the spirit of the people who live there. In the absence of a positive love of housekeeping and decorating, no house will ever be charming or attractive, and without enjoying the company of overnight guests, one probably will never achieve a very satisfying guest room. (Inspecting guest rooms can, in fact, provide some rather wicked insights into the personalities of the owners.) Those who doubt their genuine love of their fellowman should perhaps use that spare room for luggage and Christmas wrappings. □

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Above: Sir John Plumb with an impériale of Château Latour 1961. *Left:* Some of the 6,000 bottles in the hundred-year-old cellar at Christ College, Cambridge.

VINTAGE MEMORIES

By Sir John Plumb

It was a beautiful June morning in 1932 about seven thirty—pellucid blue sky, a light cool breeze but with a sense of the summer heat to come. As we walked up to the garden door, it opened and my tutor appeared in striped blue and white pajamas and heavy dressing gown and asked in his stiff, rather formal manner whether we had enjoyed ourselves. Many weeks before, he had given me two tickets for the college ball, one for myself, one for his daughter—like her father, large and big-boned—a homely girl with a passion for dancing; indeed we had danced every dance except for brief breaks for lobster, strawberries, or champagne to keep us going. We all talked for a moment or two and then his daughter disappeared into the house. I was amazed to see my tutor holding a bottle of wine, and now he thrust it toward me. "I think you might enjoy this," he said. "People think very well of it." As I walked away, I read the label: Château Lafite 1920.

I was 21, rising 22, and I did not come from a wine-drinking family. My father's nature was prudent, mildly ascetic; yet he hated to be thought a puritan. There was always a bottle of sherry in the house and a bottle of tawny port as well as a half bottle of brandy, which got slowly used up in the sauce for plum puddings although reputedly it was kept for medicinal purposes. Later in life he added a bottle of whisky of which he drank a minute quantity, drowned in water, every night before he went to bed. My nature was more ebullient, less restrained, and by 21 I had a considerable knowledge of English beer and a somewhat lesser knowledge of Scotch whisky. At 21 my latest alcoholic obsession was American cocktails with their odd and, to my friends as well as myself, romantic names—gimlet, Gibson, margarita, old-fashioned, manhattan, Rob Roy, screwdriver, etc., etc. My collecting instinct was already at work on all of these drinks. I kept a list of cocktails I had drunk, trying to keep well ahead of my friends. I also memorized and argued about the huge variety of local beers then available and now largely lost. But wine was a new world and was to prove much more collectible.

I took my bottle at once to C. P. Snow, the novelist, who was a fellow of my college and a recent friend. I received a small, succinct lecture on claret, its classified growths, the outstanding quality of Lafite, Latour, Margaux, and Haut-Brion and the revelation that he was invited from time to time to elaborate wine tastings conducted by the senior tutor and his friends. It was unthinkable, I was told, to drink the Lafite until it had rested, so it disappeared into Snow's wine cupboard, a dank dark nook in his paneled rooms.

About six weeks later we met rather solemnly at Snow's dining table with a plate of wafer-thin biscuits and two glasses in front of us. Snow's servant, Richardson (he appears as Bidwell in Snow's novel *The Masters*), had decanted the wine and had certainly drunk a glass of it. Snow half-filled the glasses, held his up to the light of the candles that Richardson had lit, and inspected its color, sniffed it, washed it

RICHARD DAVIES


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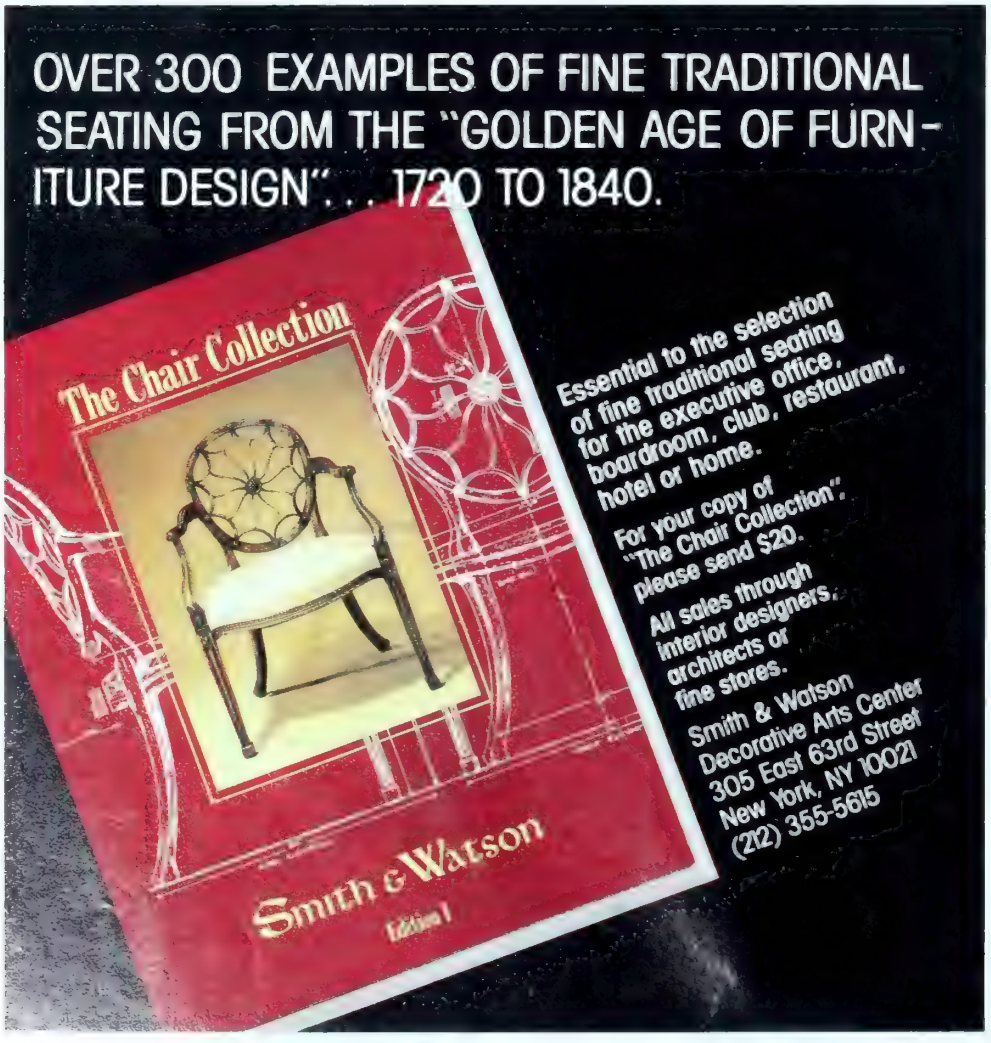
emptied his mouth, and swallowed it—a ritual that held me fascinated yet embarrassed. After all, I had no idea what to expect. So funking the ritual, I just sipped the wine. From childhood I had always delighted in scents and flavors, and that sip was a revelation of a new world, far too complex to describe. And what a measuring rod to bring to the other clarets which, with my usual impetuosity, I began to buy at the college buttery or Dolamore, the best wine shop in the town.

Only now do I realize my luck. The thirties was the most disastrous decade that the vineyards of Bordeaux have ever had to live through—so bad that many reverted to arable and pasture; even important châteaux like Château d'Issan stopped making wine. Bad for growers, they were marvelous years for drinkers: top growths at 5 shillings (about 37 cents) a bottle (that was the price of Lafite '34 when it first came on sale in 1936). Indeed every fine wine was available even to students. Unluckily I had no cellar; my tiny cottage in the country was without one, and I realized quickly that a house without a cellar was almost as bad as a house without a garden. So I lived from bottle to bottle bought at the college or in restaurants or wine shops, and my knowledge grew in a patchy sort of way, helped by Snow, who was helped by S. W. Grose, a disciple of George Saintsbury. The two discoveries I remember with immense nostalgia are the Ducru-Beaucaillou of 1929 and the Domaine de Chevalier of the same vintage, wines that I was lucky enough to drink from time to time for nearly two decades.

All collectors must have luck, and my luck consisted in my being elected a fellow of King's College, Cambridge and during the war being the only paying lodger, I think, the Rothschild family has ever had. As a fellow of King's, I had a right to space in the cellar; so at last I could lay down as much as I could afford. I found clarets of great distinction outside the tiny magical circle of premier grand cru, the Giscours '29 and the Brane Cantenac '24, wines that I liked so much I could not, and have not yet, parted with my last bottle. And King's, too, began to break down my snobbery, for I had rather disdained any wine but claret. King's, however, had fine white and red Burgundies and a marvelous port cellar, which alas was sold off at the beginning of the war by Maynard Keynes, the college's bursar, but the 1908s and particularly the Croft '12 were superlative, and two bottles of Croft '12 still repose in my cellar, which is several thousand bottles larger than it was in 1939. That expansion was due far more to the Rothschilds than to King's.

During the war I worked on code breaking, deep in the English countryside. I was lucky to be billeted in a delectable house with a very beautiful landlady whose husband was away in the army. She gave a party at which Yvonne de Rothschild was present. Yvonne became the target of a tiny pert little woman who looked as fragile as porcelain: alas she possessed the tongue of a cobra. She became so viciously anti-Semitic toward Yvonne that I took her by the shoulder and turned her out into the snow. Yvonne was so grateful that when I lost my lodgings because the absurd husband of my landlady thought, wrongly, that my attention to his wife was not honorable, Yvonne asked me to stay with her and her husband. However, in tight wartime conditions with mandatory billeting it was only prudent to do so if I became the Rothschilds' billetee, which meant paying them 35 shillings a week (about $3) and having the payment entered in my billeting book. We lived in the groom's house in the stables—small but beautifully furnished with a glorious Stubbs and a glowing Cuyp, which never ceased to lift my spirits no matter how desperate the news was in those gray years of 1940–43.

Anthony Rothschild, the chairman of the Rothschilds' bank, who had taken a first-class degree in history at Cambridge, was a marvelous companion, very quick, almost obsessively anxious, slightly (I expect deliberately) provocative as he liked a good argument. His French wife, Yvonne, was going through a cruelly difficult time, her mother lost somewhere in France and her relatives in peril, some indeed never to be seen again. She was often



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under great strain but was hopeful and a kind hostess, as he was a very kind host, often taking me to the big house to view his books, his manuscripts, and above all his cellar, for he quickly discovered my passion for claret. Few in Britain could at that time have given me a better education.

He rarely enjoyed any wine but first growths, whether of claret, Sauternes, Burgundy, or for that matter hock. His taste was somewhat limited but impeccable, and his cellar huge. Year after year we drank the first growth clarets of 1920, '24, '26, '28, and '29—very rarely we drank 1921 (the Mouton-Rothschild was outstandingly good). Naturally we drank mainly Lafite, indeed I suppose as much as two or three times a week when I was staying there; on other nights it would be Mouton, Latour, Haut-Brion, and Margaux in that order. In summertime there might be a bottle of the two superlative Yquems, the 1921 or the 1899. Through Tony Rothschild's generosity the highest standards were indelibly impressed on my memory: for years afterward, as their aroma came from the glass, I could recognize the wines I had drunk at Ascot. I was determined that, as soon as the war was over and I had a little money to spare, I would build up a cellar that would be rich in wines as fine as Tony's but more varied, for I still managed on my rare visits to Cambridge to drink some of the fine grands crus of the twenties: the Ducru-Beaucaillou '29, Gruaud-Larose '20, Rausan-Ségla '29, Domaine de Chevalier '24, Brane-Cantenac '24, and many others.

By the end of the war my apprenticeship in wine was over. Although not in the easiest financial circumstances by any means, I began to buy steadily more and more, and even now when my cellar is bursting with wine—far, far more than I can ever drink—I still tend to add to it. I collect by instinct porcelain, silver, pictures, oddments of every kind, but I know that wine has dominated my collecting life.



The ghostly wrappings in a section of the Cambridge cellar

After the war I became the steward as well as fellow of Christ's College, responsible therefore for purchasing the wines for the college buttery, which brought me in touch with the leading wine merchants of London and Bristol. There were some cheerful rogues among them—one urged me to buy cheap Algerian wine and soup it up with a spoonful of port so that I could pass it off to the college as Burgundy, but most were very dedicated men such as John Harvey and Ronald Avery, the descendants of eighteenth-century merchants, who quickly perceived my enthusiasm, taught me a great deal, and sold me small parcels of their own precious prewar wines.

And there was Harry Waugh, now better known in America than in England. But in the late forties the European wine trade in America hardly existed. Harry Waugh was to do much to change that. I took to Harry at once—straightforward and honest, open-faced and open-hearted, passionate about wine, adventurous, with a nose as good as a truffle hunter. With him and Allan Sichel I founded in 1949 the Bordeaux Club, which was limited to six members so that each one could drink a glass and a half from the same bottle. The club has flourished, providing me with magnificent meals and bottles, and it was a constant spur to buy the best clarets, Sauternes, and Graves because of the challenge of other members. Allan Sichel, part owner of Château Palmer, was often idiosyncratic—preferring the '28s to the '29s even in the late 1940s—but a wonderful talker and writer about wine, a good tough companion, and a fierce individualist.

Later, in 1950, I became a member of the Saintsbury Club, the most prestigious of all English dining and wining clubs, named after George Saintsbury who wrote the one great wine classic, *Notes on a Cellar-Book*. In these years, too, again through the kindness of the Rothschilds, I became acquainted with the great merchants of the quai de Bacalan in Bordeaux: the Cruses, Kressmanns, Calvets, and many others. Through their advice I began to discover the smaller vineyards, at that time mostly unknown to Britons and Americans: Figeac, Canon, Clos Fourtet, Croque-Michotte in Saint-Émilion and Pomerol, on the other side of the Gironde.

Nor was Pétrus much regarded at that time—Édouard Kressmann was the first Bordeaux wine merchant to introduce me to it. He gave me a wonderful bottle of the 1906, rich, complex, and far different from the claret I had been taught to like, a wine that seemed to me to be halfway to a Burgundy. Later we visited the redoubtable Madame Loubat, very tough yet chic with her blue-rinsed hair. To call her house a château struck me as ridiculous, for it was only the size of a farmhouse—quite unimpressive compared with the châteaux of the Médoc. Now its wines are the most sought after claret in the world, fought for by wine merchants whose share is often reduced to two or three cases a vintage, good or bad. It is purchased at astonishing prices from Kyoto to Kansas, London to Melbourne, and all countries en route. The same year that I drank the '06, I bought the Pétrus '20 for £1 a bottle—good certainly but to my taste inferior to the Lafite, Margaux, Mouton-Rothschild, and the rest of the first

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growths. I sold my last two or three bottles at quite extravagant prices.

The cult of Pétrus—and to a lesser extent the other fine wines like Cheval-Blanc, Trotanoy, Certan-de-May (whose 1945 Harry Waugh sold me for a few shillings a bottle)—has marked the greatest change in taste since I became a collector. It reflects what my Bordeaux merchants called *le goût anglais*. In the fifties Lynch-Bages became the great exploiter of this taste for fruity, heavy, somewhat sweet and obvious wines that lacked not so much complexity (Pétrus has plenty of that) but elegance, clarity, and proportion combined with depth. Pétrus is a Gothic wine, Lafite pure Palladian.

More important than the change in taste is the growth of wine collecting. In 1945, Baron Philippe de Rothschild had a brilliant idea to celebrate the great *vin de victoire,* which was to become the greatest vintage of the century. Each year he had an artist of repute design a label. Collectors wanted the complete series, and an almost worthless wine like the 1956 now commands a very great price—$900 a bottle—because it is rare: not much of it was bottled or sold. That would have seemed insane to the claret lovers of my youth.

Great wine needs a home and, like art, requires a touch of theater in its presentation. Cellars vary, and some are meticulously austere: rows of metal racks in a temperature-controlled atmosphere. One of the most splendid of these, in an apartment about seventy floors up the Hancock building in Chicago, contained one of the best collections of Château Latour in the world, alas now dispersed. Those of singular beauty are the brick cellars of the stately homes and manor houses of eighteenth-century England. The cellar at Houghton Hall in Norfolk of Sir Robert Walpole, the great English statesman of the early eighteenth century, is of Palladian grandeur. Walpole was a passionate lover of claret. Haut-Brion, Lafite, and Margaux were his favorites, and he bought thousands of dozens in his life. The coved ceilings, stout pillars, and brick-lined bins are a triumph of eighteenth-century architecture. Alas, the cellar is too huge for today. Equally fine is Lord Devlin's. He is a great lawyer and judge who spent his wine apprenticeship in Cambridge and the Inns of Court, but he has at his Queen Anne house at West Wick in Wiltshire one of the best-kept and certainly fully stocked cellars of claret and port in Britain. It is a wonderful place, a place of beauty and delight.

For fifty years I have collected and drunk wine. I would that I could for another fifty, but one lives in hope that one may yet taste the '78 and '82 at their early maturity if not quite at their best. For my friends I have made ample provision for my centennial in 2011, because now I collect only great bottles—for that fiesta, impériales (eight-bottle bottles). They are building up nicely: Lafite '75, '78, Palmer '82, and Mouton-Rothschild '82. Haut-Brion '79 perhaps to start them off. I only hope half a dozen friends will be able to be there and take part. □

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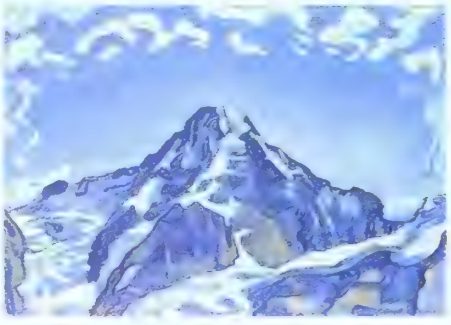
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ON VIEW

Current exhibitions not to be missed







Left: Ferdinand Hodler's *Lake Thun with the Niesen,* 1910. *Below left: The Mönch with Clouds,* 1911. *Below right: Self-Portrait,* 1914.

ALPINE PERSPECTIVES

One of the great pleasures of visiting Swiss museums is encountering the abundance of paintings by Ferdinand Hodler (1853–1918), whose work is only sparsely represented in the United States. Unlike many other Swiss masters, such as Klee, Le Corbusier, and the Giacometti brothers, Hodler did not seek fame and fortune abroad but instead remained firmly rooted in Switzerland, spending all of his adult life in Geneva. He had the audacity to tackle Big Subjects—like Love, Truth, and Virtue—and he excelled in large, highly stylized figurative paintings, often filled with nudes in rhetorical poses. It's been about fifteen years since a major Hodler exhibition circulated in this country, so the news is welcome indeed that "Ferdinand Hodler: Landscapes"—containing many of the artist's starkly constructed views of Alpine peaks and Lake Geneva—presently casts an aura of serenity at the Art Institute of Chicago through August 30; the show travels to New York City's National Academy of Design in September. *David Bourdon*

ENVIABLE GREENS



Many pottery fanatics know true rapture only in the presence of Chinese celadon—that subtle green-glazed ware which originated midway through the Shang dynasty (approximately the 15th century B.C.) and attained its artistic acme in the Song dynasty, which ended in A.D. 1279. The pale translucent celadon glazes, which range in hue from bluish green to grayish green, are what make these exquisite ceramics irresistible. Nearly ninety choice pieces are on view in "Ice and Green Clouds: Traditions of Chinese Celadon" at New York City's Asia Society through September 6, as cool and refreshing as a taste of green tea ice cream. *D.B.*



Song dynasty plate, *top,* and vase, *above,* both made near the town of Longquan in the 13th century A.D

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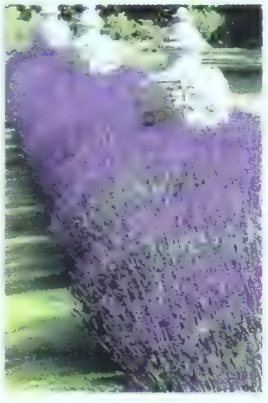
The best garden books for the season

By Henry Mitchell



My favorite garden book of the year is Robin Lane Fox's *Better Gardening*, and most gardeners could profit from the chapter on better border plants—the general American indifference to catmint, cranesbills, and lady's-mantle is surprising and distressing. As the author says, these three plants would do wonders for the average border along a walk—smothering weeds, providing long-lasting bits of color, and giving that easy luxuriant sprawling finish that is so much admired in show gardens. I once spent several hours with this author talking about Macedonia—it made sense at the time—and only in the last five minutes did we discover a mutual benign insanity on behalf of gardening, for the man is modest and does not force his interests on those who may not be gardeners. He is gardening columnist for the *Financial Times* and has designed widely admired gardens for the Chelsea Show in London. He is witty, given to outrageous puns, and is no more opinionated than any other garden writer. This book is for the gardener who has actually got into the game a little and who has perhaps wondered, viewing his marigolds, if that's all there is. Both this and another book of his, *Variations on a Garden*, are new here but appeared earlier in England. The variations are easy graceful essays on plants and moments of the gardening year—the snake's-head fritillary (his own favorite), daisies, wild cyclamen and a few dozen other pleasures. But lest you think this is undue attention to one author, let us sail briskly through an unusually attractive list of garden titles.

Above: Parterre of clipped santolina edged with box at Ham House, Surrey. *Right:* Urns and lavender at Wakehurst Place. *Below:* Packwood House at the end of a lane of giant yews.





Sometimes reference books are slighted because the subject changes so frequently, but no long-range gardener can do without them. A particularly good new one is *The Oxford Companion to Gardens* by Geoffrey and Susan Jellicoe, Patrick Goode, and Michael Lancaster. Arranged like a dictionary, it tells you in a few paragraphs about the great garden at Bodnant; there is a good hefty article on Chinese gardens, with brief informative notes on everything from little-known Spanish botanists to the Garden of Eden.

Capability Brown is rarely appreciated by modern gardeners with a sixth of an acre, since he ran to tremendous places like Blenheim and Chatsworth. Thomas Hinde's *Capability Brown: The Story of a Master Gardener* includes excellent photographs of Brown's landscapes, softly rolling with lakes and artfully disposed clumps of trees. He liked grass to an unconscionable extent, bringing it to the walls of great houses and destroying some charming old gardens in the process. To call him a master gar-



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somewhat perverse if by a garden you mean what everybody means by "garden." Certainly he cared little or nothing for flowers. Because he was a figure of tremendous influence on eighteenth-century gardens and all large gardens that came later, Brown should be studied by those who can conceive of gardening as nature dressed and caressed though not formalized and flowered. Brown's elegant clients appear sometimes memorably, like the Earl of Harcourt who was killed diving after his pup, which had fallen down a well, and illustrations of garden temples and other structures remind us that Brown's landscapes were not meant exclusively for rabbits and cows.

Far from modest but a boon to those planning travel to Britain is the *Collins Book of British Gardens,* a guide to two hundred notable beauties in all parts of the realm. Not all are here—the great garden of Bodnant is notably absent—but more are than any mortal will ever get round to visiting, and the four groups of photographs are irresistible. Sezincote, for instance, looks like a dream, but then it does in reality, too.

Apart from plain guidebooks, anyone will surely wish to read two new books of the indefatigable and admirable Penelope Hobhouse, *Private Gardens of England* and *The National Trust—A Book of Gardening.* The first dwells on 33 of the most beautiful gardens of England. Here is Tresco, with huge date palms, dasylirions, furcraeas, and aeoniums on the one hand and the Tudor relic Hatfield on the other. Many are open to the public at various times. Ms. Hobhouse, who presides over a famous garden herself (Tintinhull) and who is endlessly knowledgeable about plants, writes not only about the design but tells enough about individual plants for the reader to perceive how some of the fine effects are achieved. Her other book, on National Trust gardens, differs from the earlier fine work of Graham Stuart Thomas on that subject by concentrating entirely on the plants and garden features (for example, roses, water, weed control, edgings, and so forth) as seen in many of the Trust gardens. Valuable indeed are the specific notes from various head gardeners in a section on practical maintenance. Indexes of plants are useful: you can find roses in a dozen gardens here without pawing through the entire volume to find the comments on a particular variety.

The subject of Mac Griswold's *Pleasures of the Garden* is the gardens shown in the collection of paintings, ivory sculpture, and other objects in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The text is a bit more lively than one expects from that august institution. "One good thing that can be said for Genghis Khan," says Griswold, "is that his followers brought the peony from China." Griswold's essay is fine, and the illustrations, with captions of more than usual distinction and clarity, present nothing less than a grand sweep of garden yearnings and achievements over the centuries.

Nancy Steen's *The Charm of Old Roses* is a grand book originally published in New Zealand, then in England, and now after a lapse of two decades in America. Over many years Mrs. Steen turned up a surprising number of old garden roses in New Zealand and acquired many more through importation. Her knowledge was firsthand, based on many years of intimate association, and her love of these splendid plants was second to none. The color photographs have been reprocessed, and the text remains that of the 1966 edition, which is to say admirable. A perfect book for the newcomer to old roses as well as a treasure for the committed devotee. But there is more to gardening than dirt. After we have gotten tired and kicked the hollyhock in disgust, it is agreeable to turn to garden writers who inspire us. Vita Sackville-West's *Illustrated Garden Book* is wonderful because her notes are so brief and optimistic that we launch readily into projects we would never undertake if we read a more exhaustive account. Robin Lane Fox has assembled yet another collection of her work, much of it quite new in book form. The color illustrations—sprigs of flowers dropped artfully on the pages—are pleasant, even when unrecognizable, and enchanting when we spot an old friend. I never saw 'Zéphi-





Never trust a man who lavishes expensive gifts upon you," ny Mother always said. "Unless you really like him."

She told me a lot of things about ıen, my Mother. And she was almost lways right.

But this man was no typical man. his was a man in a million. A man ho seemed very fond of me.

It had started only six weeks ago hen I was stuck in row 12 on one of ıose seemingly endless flights that top in Guam on their way to Tokyo.

In seat 12F, alongside of me, was an lbow that seemed intent on straying cross the armrest the entire flight. It as his elbow.

By the time they served lunch I as halfway to falling in love.

Over the next two weeks I saw him ıst about every day. So when he asked ıe to join him for a trip out of town, it asn't really a surprise.

After a long and leisurely lunch at remote Country Inn, my man took me or a walk into the garden.

"This is for you, and for our days to ome," he whispered in my ear as he anded me a package about half the ize of a shoe box.

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The curve of the linkages on the bracelet matched my wrist as though it was designed just for me. And it felt solid and substantial.

This was a watch for a lifetime.

Admiring the way the raised gold numerals seemed to shimmer in the reflected sparkle of the diamonds, I suddenly recalled my Mother's advice.

"There must be strings attached to a gift as beautiful as this?" I asked my man, perhaps a little hopefully.

He let go of me and knelt down on one knee, "I was rather hoping it would help get you to the church on time."



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THE LIGHT REFRESHER FROM ENGLAND. ONLY WINNING TASTES AS GOOD.

rine Drouhin' look like that, but no matter. It is impossible not to like Sackville-West as a gardener.

A Bouquet of Garden Writing brings excerpts from Jekyll, Sackville-West, William Robinson, E. A. Bowles, and the remarkable Reginald Farrer, who rockets to the heights if he sees so much as a daisy, yet nobody has ever described wild musk roses so passionately or so well as he. Many gardeners do not possess the original books of these masters, and this anthology is a good introduction to all of them. The same may be said of the larger and more ambitious *Leaves from the Garden*—nearly two centuries of garden writing edited by Clare Best and Caroline Boisset. How many gardeners now have read J. C. Loudon, Shirley Hibberd, Canon Ellacombe, Reginald Blomfield, or Dean Hole? Yet all of them were outstanding in print as well as in the garden, and this book is a treasure.

Jane Brown, still fresh from her remarkable book on Gertrude Jekyll, now offers *The English Garden in Our Time,* a survey or rather a careful study of gardens from the time of Gertrude Jekyll (in what we assume was the idyllic year of 1902) to that of Geoffrey Jellicoe. One need not be impressed by Jellicoe's garden at Sutton Place, as I was, to perceive something distinct about it; by the way, whoever authorized a Virginia creeper on the priceless soft Tudor brick should be shot. This is a book touching on changing philosophy as well as changing taste, and the author's clarity and mastery of her subject is a joy. Also published this year by Jane Brown is *Lanning Roper and His Gardens* which chronicles the life of an American garden designer, consultant, and writer long resident in England. He once wrote a piece "Can Gardens Be Too Tidy?" which few of us need to read but which shows he was all right. Roper was influential as a gardening writer, a point not emphasized as heavily as it might have been. A chapter devoted entirely to his writings (*Lanning Roper on Gardening* is not mentioned, though it is one of the finest books of its kind in the language) would have been welcome, though references to many of his writings are woven into the general narrative. Shortly before his death in 1983, he was asked to design the garden for the Prince of Wales's new country house but could not undertake it. Much is told of his private life, and the treatment throughout is sympathetic and beautifully written, as we expect from Jane Brown.

The English Garden Room edited by Elizabeth Dickson is a heroic collection of conservatories, sun rooms, and enclosed galleries positively stuffed with flowers and garden gewgaws. A few are surreal, a few are austere, but most of them suggest Lewis Carroll, nonsense of the best sort, and raise fantasies of the leisured life. There should be an insatiable demand for books on small gardens, and Roy Strong's *Creating Small Gardens* is a welcome addition to the limited supply. Many such gardens are illustrated, but the book deals less with particular ones than with such omnipresent questions as how to enclose, how to choose paving, plants, seating, plant supports (he speaks well of arches), and how to water. Quite good for the intelligent beginner or re-beginner.

The Well-Furnished Garden by Michael Balston is a mouth-watering compendium of summerhouses, sculpture (some strange and irresistible topiary hounds running across the lawn), wonderful pavements, and woodland drifts of daffodils. Not just ornaments,



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in other words, but design worked entirely with plants, too. The author shows an ugly trompe l'oeil trellis design, explaining part of what's the matter with it, and faces this page with a picture of a flawless little garden of common greens so lovely that even the most fanatical collector of exotics would gladly settle for it.

It is surprising what can be done with a space six feet square when the design is imaginative and heroically restrained. *Creative Gardens* by David Stevens shows roughly a million well-photographed gardens of all sizes, and all notable for their fresh appeal. If you have seen a million uninspired fish pools, take a look at the ones he has found, God knows how. The level of taste and the possibilities of lifting ideas are very fine here. *Seaside Gardening* is a book I do not covet, though I rather admire it, as my wife convinces me that on the sea you need a palm hut and a yellow Jaguar and maybe not even the Jaguar. Still, gardeners are everywhere, even on seacoasts, and Susan S. H. Littlefield gets right down to the nuts and bolts of the business and then shows wonderful pictures of outstanding examples. The great stairs of the seaside Tresco would cost roughly two million to duplicate, but the meadow grassy look of some gardens by Oehme, Van Sweden & Associates would be as handsome (and as trouble-free) in town as on the coast. How to proceed from scratch is her theme, and she makes it all seem as feasible as the result is attractive. May I say at the last I am an impatient reader and easily toss books out, but after several hundred hours of reading (not in one day, of course) these will stay on my shelves. □

Books mentioned in this review:

BETTER GARDENING
by Robin Lane Fox
Godine, 184 pp., $19.95

VARIATIONS ON A GARDEN
by Robin Lane Fox
Godine, 182 pp., $17.50

THE OXFORD COMPANION TO GARDENS
edited by Sir Geoffrey and Susan Jellicoe, Patrick Goode, and Michael Lancaster
Oxford University Press, 635 pp., $49.95

CAPABILITY BROWN: THE STORY OF A MASTER GARDENER
by Thomas Hinde
Norton, 224 pp., $27.50

COLLINS BOOK OF BRITISH GARDENS
by George Plumptre
Salem House, 463 pp., $13.95

PRIVATE GARDENS OF ENGLAND
by Penelope Hobhouse
Harmony Books, 223 pp., $40

THE NATIONAL TRUST—A BOOK OF GARDENING: A PRACTICAL GUIDE
by Penelope Hobhouse
Little, Brown, 256 pp., $29.95

PLEASURES OF THE GARDEN: IMAGES FROM THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
by Mac Griswold
Abrams, 160 pp., $27.50

THE CHARM OF OLD ROSES
by Nancy Steen
Milldale Press, 261 pp., $24.95

THE ILLUSTRATED GARDEN BOOK
by Vita Sackville-West
edited by Robin Lane Fox
Atheneum, 191 pp., $22.50

A BOUQUET OF GARDEN WRITING
edited by Ursula Buchan
Godine, 192 pp., $25

LEAVES FROM THE GARDEN
edited by Clare Best and Caroline Boisset
Norton, 415 pp., $22.50

THE ENGLISH GARDEN IN OUR TIME: FROM GERTRUDE JEKYLL TO GEOFFREY JELLICOE
by Jane Brown
Antique Collectors' Club
272 pp., $39.50

LANNING ROPER AND HIS GARDENS
by Jane Brown
Rizzoli, 224 pp., $35

THE ENGLISH GARDEN ROOM
edited by Elizabeth Dickson
Little, Brown
159 pp., $24.95

CREATING SMALL GARDENS
by Roy Strong
Villard Books, 143 pp., $22.50

THE WELL-FURNISHED GARDEN
by Michael Balston
Simon and Schuster
192 pp., $24.95

CREATIVE GARDENS
by David Stevens
Salem House, 192 pp., $24.95

SEASIDE GARDENING
by Susan S. H. Littlefield
Simon and Schuster, 96 pp., $12.95

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THE MALTESE CONNECTION

The crossroads of the Mediterranean is a surprisingly private place

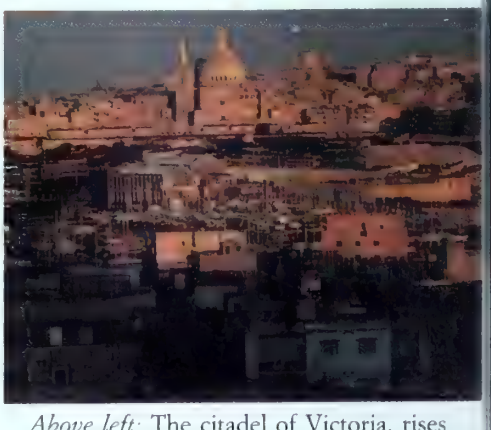
By Simon Blow

My first visit to Malta was made with hesitation. I was sure that this former British colony and naval base, set in warm waters south of Sicily, would be crowded beyond endurance with white-skinned trippers. One thing the British like is a country where there is no language barrier, and since English is the island's second tongue, Malta has long attracted the British holiday maker. Beyond that, numerous Anglo-Maltese marriages have led to friends and relatives treating Malta as the annual occasion, to say nothing of the settlers—mainly retired folk—who were encouraged to go there in the sixties with the bait of no income tax. So would a time in Malta be not so different from a visit to one of England's south coast resorts—say Eastbourne for the elderly or Margate for the loutish young? When, soon after my arrival on that first visit, I found a seafront littered with hot dog stands and saw a bar called Cheers!, my worst forebodings seemed to be confirmed.

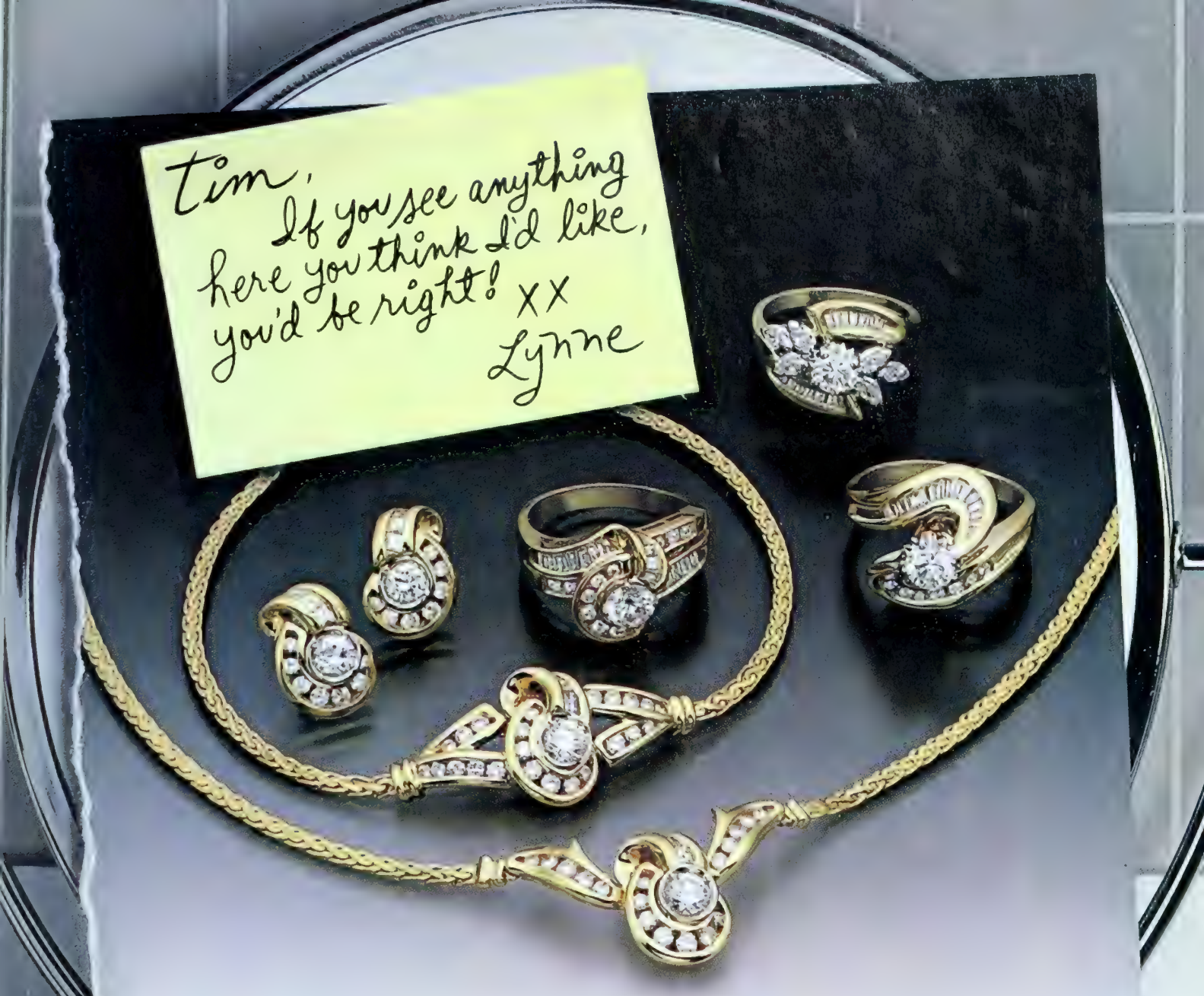


But I had only touched the surface of the Maltese islands. As I came to visit Malta more regularly, I began to see that there was a life as indigenous to the islands as to any other self-respecting Mediterranean country. If anything, Malta for its size has preserved an identity in the face of tourism more naturally than Spain—a place whose once-tranquil riviera has long been ruined by package-tour commercialism. In Malta the tripper-ridden areas turn out to be few and localized. It did not take me long to learn to avoid them. A twenty-minute drive from the house where I stay—fifteen from Malta's capital, Valletta—and I could be swimming off deserted rocky beaches and lunching in the undisturbed fishing village of Marsaxlokk. Invariably in Malta it is a drive along bumpy empty roads through towns and hamlets dominated by sumptuous Baroque churches. These churches are an ever-functioning feature of Maltese life: the Maltese are among the most devout of Mediterranean Catholics, and hardly a day goes by without the pealing of bells heard either near or in the distance. Their silver-topped domes break continually across a sunburnt landscape, as D. H. Lawrence discovered when he traveled there in the 1920s: "Then we dashed off to another village and climbed a church-dome that rises like a tall blister on the plain."

I am always entranced in Malta by the sleepy villages, reminiscent of southern Italy, and the bold Baroque buildings of its towns, in particular, Valletta. Most of Valletta's lavish palaces were built by the Knights of Saint John in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Order of Saint John, founded in Jerusalem, ran a Christian hospital that cared for pilgrims, but by the twelfth century the Knights were crusaders fighting the infidel, and it was the emperor Charles V who offered them Malta. Mostly French, Spanish, and Italian by nationality, they settled there in the sixteenth century and defended the islands during the famous siege by the Turks in 1565. For four months the Turks besieged the island, and Malta's ultimate victory



Above left: The citadel of Victoria, rises beyond a cemetery on the island of Gozo, the smaller main island of the Malta group. *Above:* Valletta, the capital of Malta, seen from the outskirts.



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became one of the great propaganda stories of the Christian world against that of Islam. Numbers were freely exaggerated to make Malta's resistance the more heroic and the victory godsent.

Some of the atmosphere of those days can still be sensed in such fortressed Renaissance towns as Valletta; the world. It is called the Silent City because it is without traffic or shops. But the people are silent, too. Mdina is the seat of Malta's nobility, but they are not in evidence as you stroll down deserted alleys banked on either side by huge Renaissance palaces. Within these houses there may be treasures beyond belief, but even if you are a friend, with their coats of arms, but once the service is over, there is only one who lingers a little. He is a rotund elderly figure who walks with a bowed gait and pauses every few paces to stare around in wide-eyed bewilderment. The Marquis of San Vincenzo Ferreri is a fitting symbol of Malta's silent nobility. He lives almost adjacent to the cathedral, up a short alley, in the family palazzo. Sometimes I visited him there where, in spite of large palatial rooms, he entertains hardly at all. In a large dust-sheeted salon, we talked of Malta's past, of his education at Oxford, of the impossibility of finding servants, but never of his treasures. Each evening, Marquis Alfio told me, he makes himself a sandwich before retiring—once more, I imagine, with a nervous bowing gait—to his bed.

There is, however, one exception to the low profile maintained by this class that no longer rules. The palace of Marquis Scicluna is at Naxxar, a town toward the north of the island. It faces yet another Baroque church dominating a main square, but the marquis is not to be found in the palace's ornate gilded rooms that make up its piano



across the grand harbor from Valletta are the three fortressed cities of Vittoriosa, Senglea, and Cospicua. Their squares give on to ancient walls hiding palaces and Baroque churches niched with saints and apostles. In Vittoriosa the Inquisitor's Palace, with its grim sunless dungeons and a ceiling bearing the coats of arms of 62 inquisitors, is a reminder of the pomp and harshness of the early faith. It is idling around these cities, where tourists seldom tramp, that Malta's interior life can be glimpsed.

Above: The view of the surrounding valleys in early spring from the castle on Gozo reveals why the island is known as the Ireland of Malta. Much of the land is given over to agriculture, and women make a much-sought-after lace. *Right:* A typical Catholic procession in Luqa, one of the smaller villages.



The true Malta exists in its privacy. There will always be the outward show of friendliness, but this does not necessarily extend to a welcome in the home. Malta, after all, has been occupied and invaded many times, which is the reason the natives proceed with an air of caution. Nowhere can this reserve be better seen than in the island's ancient capital—Mdina. This citadel, the size of only a large village, rises dramatically from a hilltop in the center of the island and has long closed its shutters on it will take time before you are told what they are. Trying once to discover who might have been the artist of a painting that interested me, I remarked on the picture's charm. "You have a good eye," came back the comment. No more was to be revealed.

In St. Paul, Mdina's great Baroque cathedral set in a square of golden stone, you find the citadel's inhabitants. At matins or at vespers oddments of the nobility file across a floor inlaid nobile. Fired by his experiences as a gunner in World War II, he prefers to sit in a downstairs dungeon surrounded by military paraphernalia. When I met him, he was sitting behind a desk littered with papers and plans of strategy. And yet the marquis does not see himself as limited purely to military affairs. Guitarist, painter, sculptor, politician, the marquis is all things to all men.

"Jolly good to meet a proper Brit,"


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we had exchanged only a few sentences. He then gave me four topics, which he said would be important to get in my report: NATO Command, Qaddafi, economic mess, harbor. I attempted to explain that I came to Malta for pleasure. "Never mind," he said. "Get that in the report." He then shelved politics and told me about his painting and that he had lived for a time in London. I asked him where. "In Chelsea, of course. I am an artist," he replied. Before we parted, he let me understand that the world was mad and that he, the marquis, was the one to put it all right. "I will make you a member of the Casino Maltese," he cried as he waved me off from his quarters.

So Malta does not lack color, either in its people or its scenery. Since it became a republic in 1974 and the last British ship sailed from the harbor in 1979, the Maltese have been keen to state their own identity. They like to point out, for instance, that it was they who invited the British to protect them in 1814—against harassment from the French—and thus they were not a conquered people. Nonetheless, Malta became a British colony with a governor and all the trappings of colonialism. Today there can be resentment toward the colonial past, and there was talk of removing a statue of Queen Victoria from a Valletta square. In the meantime, statues of national heroes are erected and on a letter you do not put G.C. (George Cross) after Malta anymore. The cross awarded to Malta by King George VI for its valiant resistance to three years of constant air attacks from German and Italian bombers is now considered to carry patronage.

The scars of World War II are unavoidable. With more than three thousand air raids over the island, the loss of buildings, particularly in Valletta, is still evident. Fortressed ramparts may circle the town but the main gate was blown to pieces and has been replaced by 1950s Modernism. And as you descend Valletta's high street, you pass the sad ruins of the opera house. It was left there as a reminder of what had happened. But the eighteenth-century Manoel Theater is intact, as are many of the squares. I like best to wander at dusk through Valletta's steep streets—for the town is built over a promontory—and remember that much has not changed since Byron, with his clubfoot, damned the city for its "cursed streets of stairs."

I have been to Malta four times now—thanks to a friend who kindly lends me his house—and that is time enough to form habits. The Lantern Bar in Valletta is a favorite haunt because its bogus Spanish-Tudor interior makes me think of racy English colonels and naval commanders from bygone days—although for many years its clientele has been more endearingly demimonde; the rocky beaches off Marsaxlokk and the northern part of the island are wild and deserted, but it was not until my last visit that I saw what the Maltese consider their most treasured resort. Gozo is the second island of the Maltese group—the third being the diminutive Comino—and it is for some reason far greener than Malta and has a smaller population. However, it has long been a resort for a group of sophisticated British expatriots who are the jealous guardians of its charms. I was taken to a quiet restaurant by the sea and firmly told, "Don't tell anyone about it. We don't want it exposed." These proprietorial rights—so necessary, perhaps, if you live there the year round—brought back to me the strictures of Miss Mapp in her fictional village of Tilling, in that famous series of novels by E. F. Benson on English small-town life. Like the Maltese nobility, though with less precedence, these expatriots resent the glances of intrusive outsiders.

Days in Malta take on their own rhythm. Malta for me is sitting in the garden of my friends Maria and her sister, Bice, at Lija and hearing their stories. They are telling me about an aunt of theirs who left Malta to join a strict order. The convent was in Florence, and from a tender age she never saw Malta again. When they visited her before her death, she had only one question to ask: "Is the water round Malta still the same blue?" And so it is. □



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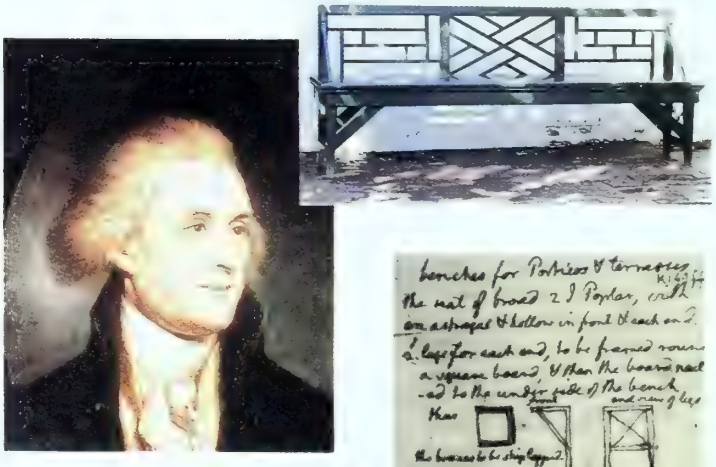
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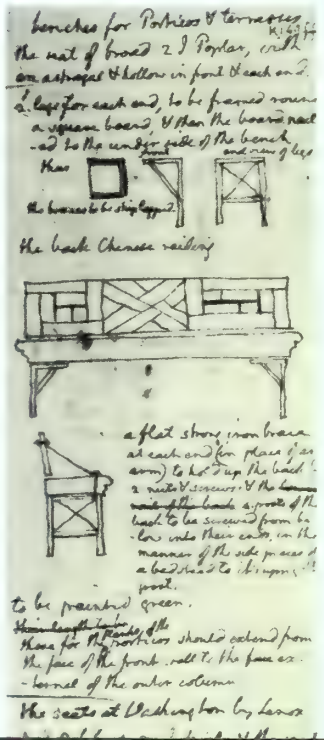


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Lee Jofa's fabric group Caravans began at the Textile Museum in Washington, D.C. The eight new designs (three *below*) are adaptations of antique Turkish and Indian textiles. For museum catalogue call (202) 667-0441. Also available from Lee Jofa through decorators.





REDWARE PROWLERS

At the table or on the wall, this redware cat plate, *above,* by Vaughan Smith of Westcote Pottery in Columbus, Ohio, will be noticed. Each 11-inch-diameter plate is individually stenciled. Price $42, plus $5 shipping, from Museum of American Folk Art Shop, 62 West 50 St., NYC 10112.

NOUVELLE SEATING

The Medusie daybed ($4,500), by J. L. Godivier, *below,* and Chaise A ($250), *inset,* by Xavier Pauchard are two of 75 avant-garde French pieces—new designs and copies of modern classics—available through designers from Furniture of the Twentieth Century in Manhattan.



FLOORCLOTH UPDATE

Painted canvas floorcloths, popular in the 18th-century, are definitely back, usually reproducing classic patterns. Charles Goforth's contemporary example, *right,* trompe l'oeil crumbling tile, measures 4 by 6½ feet, is polyurethane protected, and sells for $1,500. Goforth's floorcloths are custom designs, and price varies with size and intricacy. For information, (212) 362-8355.



PHASES OF THE LOON

The 24-inch-long Common Loon ($400), *right,* was carved of white pine and basswood by master decoy maker Kevin Kerrigan, who specializes in replicas of 19th-century originals. For brochure call his Gentle Sport in Connecticut; (203) 438-8464.

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Respectful Rehabilitation *is a practical illustrated question-and-answer book prepared by preservationists of the National Park Service to help individuals and organizations with old and historic buildings. They cover all structural elements as well as safety, code, and tax requirements. Order book ($15.95 postpaid) from Preservation Press, 1600 H St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20006.*

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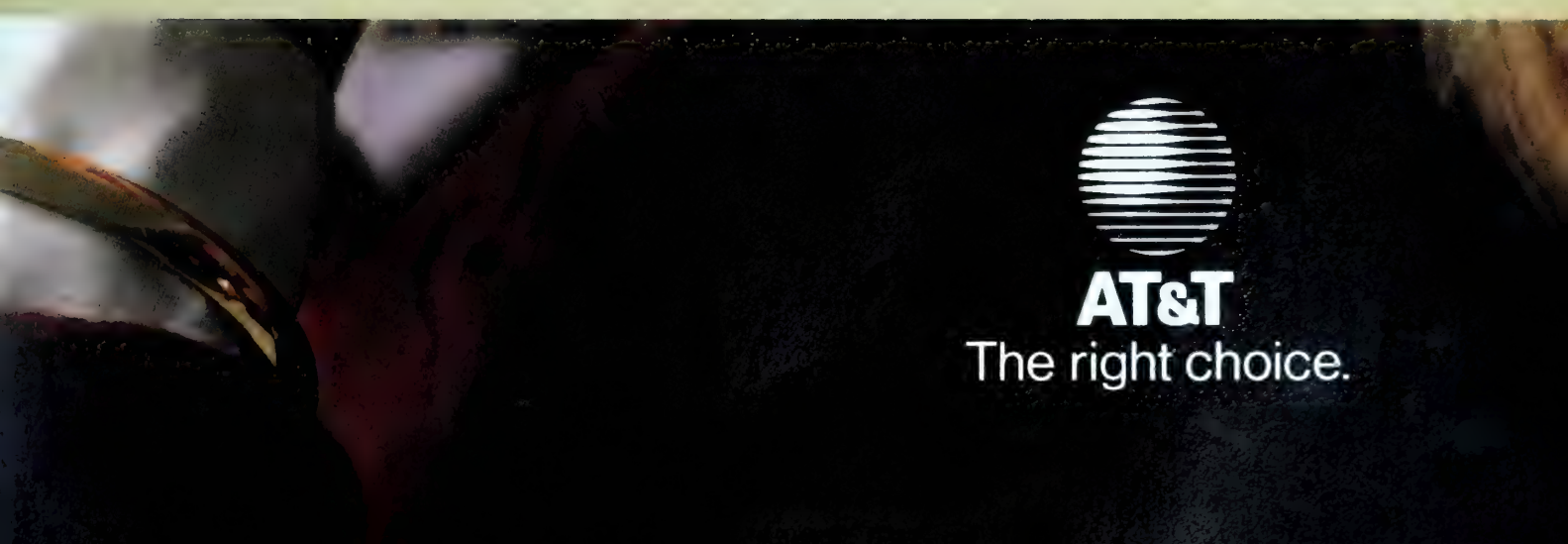
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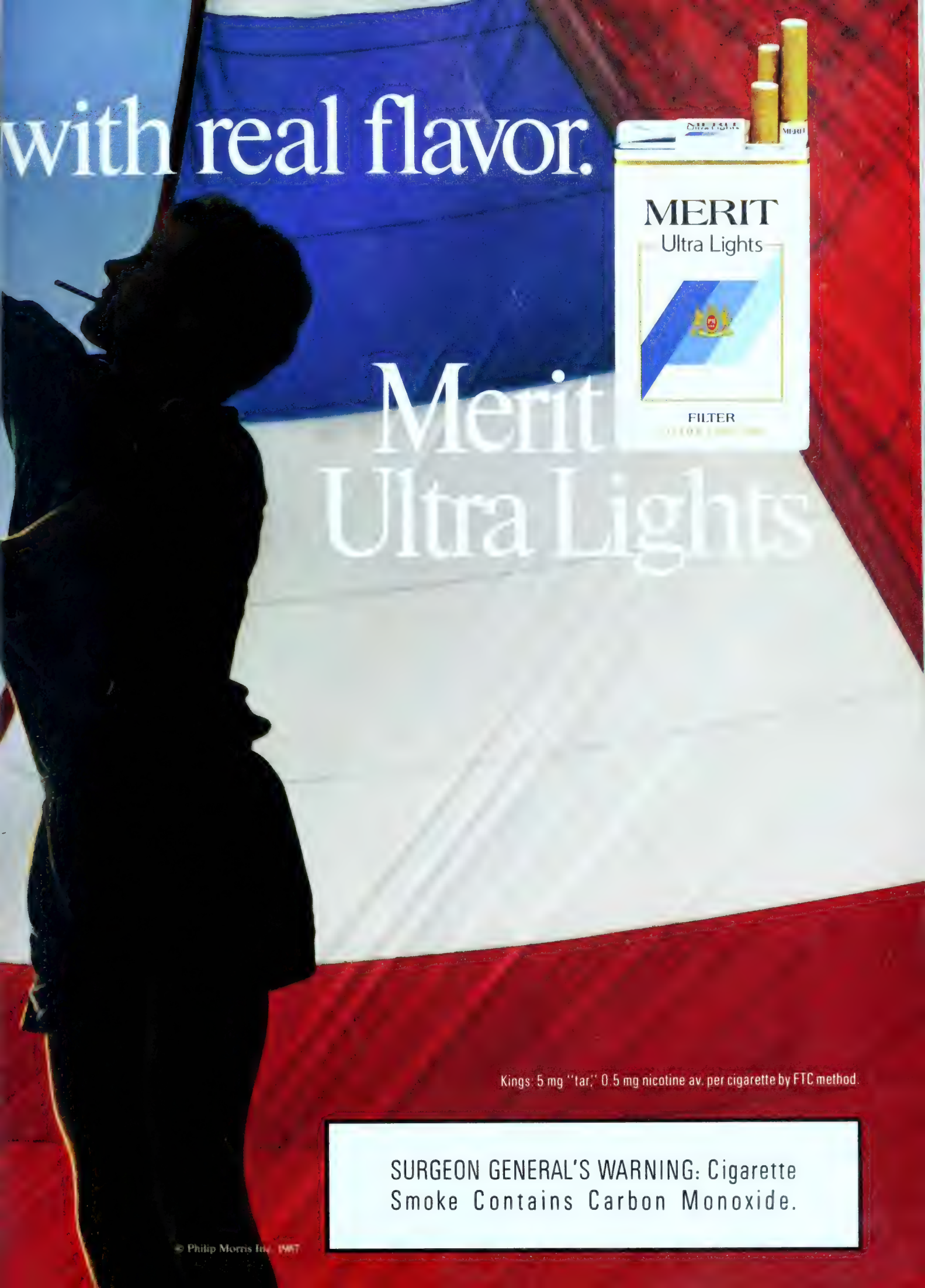
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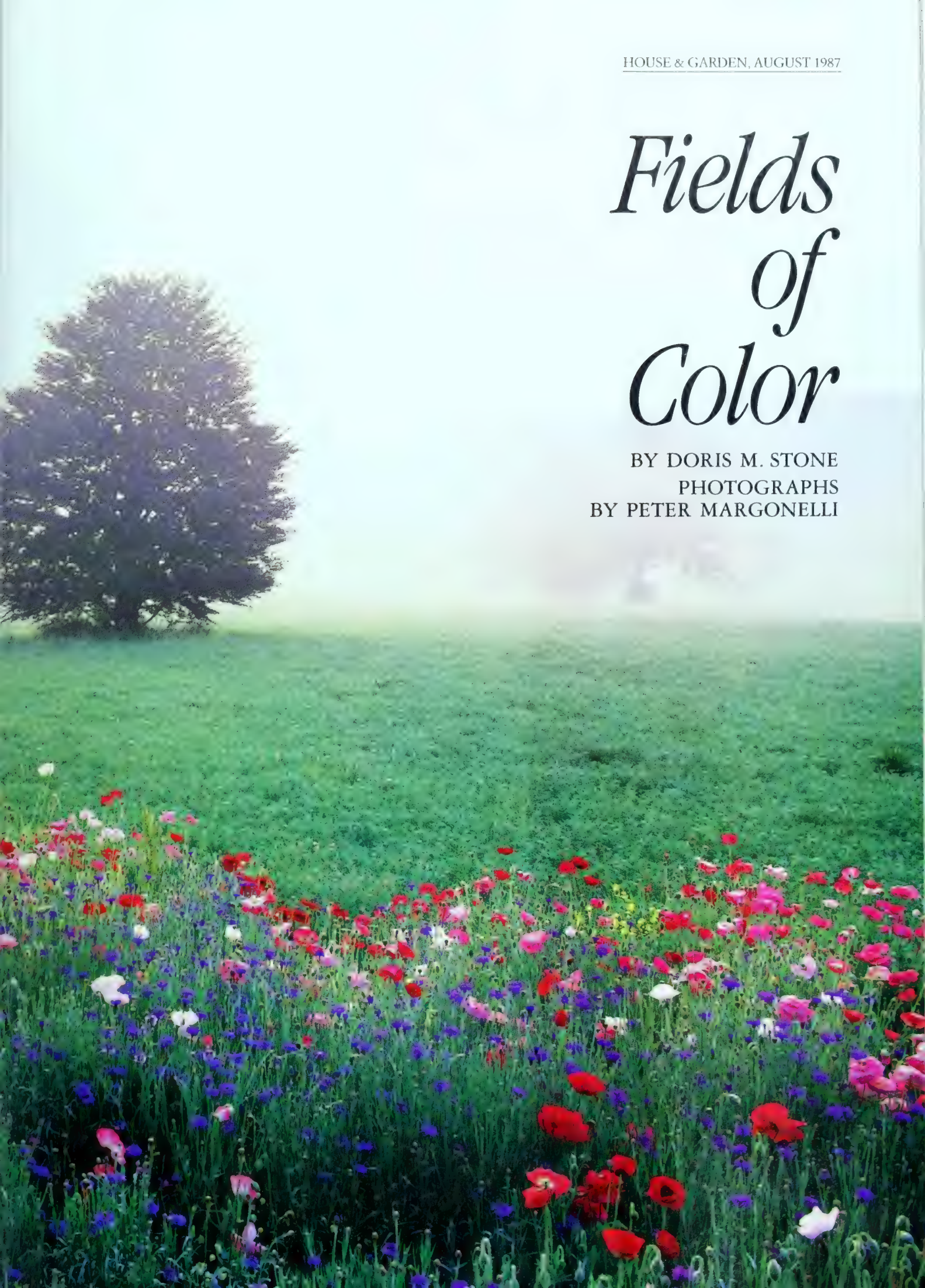


A glowing meadow of field poppies, cornflowers and yellow toadflax dividing Sir John Thouron's garden from surrounding pastures sweeps into a line of conical hedges.

HOUSE & GARDEN, AUGUST 1987

Fields of Color

BY DORIS M. STONE
PHOTOGRAPHS
BY PETER MARGONELLI





In the Brandywine Valley's gently rolling terrain Sir John Thouron has created a garden of many gardens where colorful plantings alternate with vistas to green hills

Russell Page has stated that for a garden site he would prefer a hollow to a hilltop. "A panorama and a garden seen together distract from each other. . . . Everything is there at once and one has no desire to wander—to make discoveries." Page would have approved of the setting of Sir John Thouron's garden, Glencoe, which occupies a natural depression in the rolling grassy hills of eastern Pennsylvania. The hills comprise an extensive horse farm, for besides gardening one of Sir John's other interests is raising racehorses.

Glencoe is essentially a strolling garden. For best effect you follow a prescribed route, beginning at the front door of the house and, after making a wide arc, returning to the starting point. Small surprises, contrasts, and pastoral vistas succeed one another along the way.

Like many valleys, Glencoe is probably a natural frost pocket. Winters can register temperatures of minus 10 degrees Fahrenheit, so the semitender shrubs that the visitor from New York expects to see are conspicuously absent.



The double herbaceous border separated by a flagstone walk marks the beginning of the tour. It is the showstopper. Dense hemlock hedges on either side make a perfect verdant background for the riotous colors that peak in June. Not for Sir John the pale pastels of the Gertrude Jekyll school, delicately and inconspicuously blending into one another. He likes strong rich purples, reds, magentas, yellows, and deep blues. Among all this brilliance I did note, however, the judicious positioning of gray foliage plants such as *Stachys lanata,* the common verbascum, clary (*Salvia sclarea*), *Gypsophila paniculata,* as well as the ornamental grass *Miscanthus sinensis,* all of which help to blend the vibrant colors. Also contributing to the muting effect is the purple-sheened foliage of the species rose *Rosa rubrifolia* (now *R. glauca,* according to the latest botanical usage), two of which gracefully drape themselves over the north border.

Color is not Sir John's only concern in planning these borders. For a successful display—though most garden visitors are unaware of it—contours and shapes must merge into a cohesive whole. Here vertical accents are provided by goatsbeard (*Aruncus dioicus*), plume poppy (*Macleaya cordata*), yellow kniphofia, ligularia, various cream, pink, and red astilbes, ornamental grasses, and the shorter but striking scarlet *Penstemon barbatus.* The mounding types include gypsophila and coreopsis, while spikes are well represented by liatris, the speedwells, and the lobelias. Edging the borders are the matlike creepers—various pinks, verbenas, and the beautiful foliage of lady's-mantle. Each is carefully placed to give overall symmetry. Constant vigilance and attention to detail, such as we see here, are the earmarks of a successful herbaceous border, winning appreciation from the professionals as well as from aesthetic nonhorticulturists. After all, Gertrude Jekyll, the doyenne of the herbaceous border, was a painter first and a horticulturist second.

As you are conducted along the route, Sir John, like a true plantsman, spices his comments with anecdotes regarding the origin of this or that plant, precious varieties he has collected over the years: one snipped from the Vatican garden, another a gift from Lady Serena James in Yorkshire. Many, however, were imported as plants or seed from Alan Bloom's famous and magnificent collection of perennials in Norfolk, England. (Seeds and cuttings are raised in Glencoe's greenhouses throughout the year.) Rarities to note in this section—to mention only two—are the *Geranium psilostemon,* a cranesbill with magenta petals and almost black eyes, and the remarkable drumstick alliums, which I had never seen before. The owner's special favorites are the pinks, ranging from candy pink to deep dark crimson, some of which he has bred himself. Incidentally they are called pinks not because of color but because all have petals with notched, or pinked, edges.

For Sir John the plants themselves are personalities, a viewpoint I, as a fellow countrywoman, can appreciate. The modern English garden puts flowers first and design second—not *(Text continued on page 158)*

Midsummer drifts of color and texture interwoven to create the spectacular island bed, *opposite,* include a verbena hybridized by Sir John, *Achillea millefolium* 'Fire King', lilies, and coreopsis. *Above:* A specimen beech, *Fagus sylvatica* 'Rotundifolia', next to the island bed, is his favorite tree in the garden; beyond it, a ring of pollarded scarlet willows for winter color.



A pair of magnificent herbaceous borders backed by hemlock hedges flank a flagstone path at the front of the house. Mats of ground-hugging species like dianthus and *Alchemilla mollis* spill into the path. The almost-violet foliage of *Rosa rubrifolia* and greeny yellow plumes of *Aruncus dioicus* make striking accents in the carefully composed tapestry of colors and textures in flowers and leaves alike.





One of the garden's many surprises, the rock garden, *opposite*—screened on both sides by plantings of conifers, rhododendrons, mountain laurel, Japanese maples, and viburnums—displays delicate alpines along a stream that cascades from pool to pool. *Above:* More rock plants flourish on the terrace steps, among them helianthemum, lychnis, rarities like *Ourisia elegans* and rhodohypoxis, and several dianthus cultivars, one of which, 'Rachel', was hybridized by Sir John and his head gardener, Jock Christie. *Below:* A splendid stand of Pacific giant delphiniums.







Brilliant and unusual combinations of strong colors are a specialty with Sir John. Here near the stables, crocosmias in several shades of red and orange set off the glaucous foliage and purple blossoms of an acanthus.





Behind a sofa in the spare white living room, *opposite*, a blue-gray table holds a collection of small treen books. The three bottles were designed by Van Day Truex for Baccarat. *Left:* The exterior of the house was restored to its original state by Hugh Newell Jacobsen.

PURE NANTUCKET

Architect Hugh Newell Jacobsen's timeless update of a 1757 classic

BY JOHN CHANCELLOR
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN HALL

It was in 1984 that Eugenie Voorhees seized the house at 47 Orange Street and the house seized her. It's what happens to all of us when we set out to make a space our own. We want to stamp it with a personal seal.

This had been done by the many previous owners of 47 Orange. The house was built about 1757 on a hill overlooking Nantucket Harbor. Shipowners and sea captains had built grand houses on Orange, India, and Main streets; the merchants who owned ships stood at the top of the social ladder, and the fortunes they made in whaling were reflected in their elegant houses.

The building at 47 Orange was not one of those. A house, perhaps, for a second son or a young doctor. Two stories and a garret. A kitchen garden in the back. But to describe this house as simple is to miss the point. The vernacular architecture of eighteenth-century Nantucket, which reflected but did not copy buildings elsewhere in New England, produced houses of remarkable poise and balance. The gray shingled façades and white trim gave each building a touch of formal dignity. Although 47 Orange is no mansion, it is handsome and well proportioned, in the best tradition of its time.

Nantucket's prosperity was based on whale oil, which lit lamps all over the world. When kerosene replaced whale oil, Nantuck-





et's economy flickered and died. The boom had produced a thriving, rich eighteenth-century American town. The bust preserved it. There was no money for new buildings. Nantucket's architecture was set in amber. That is why parts of it today have the most authentic eighteenth-century streets in America.

Mrs. Voorhees's problem was what had been done to her house over the two centuries of boom and bust. Seven generations of Nantucketers had lived at 47 Orange before Eugenie Voorhees became its owner. Probably half of them lived there during bad times. The house was interesting archaeology but a structural mess.

Her Manhattan apartment is a simple white oasis high above 57th Street. Her architect there—as for her house in Nantucket—was Hugh Newell Jacobsen of Washington, D.C., one of the country's most distinguished residential architects. A detailed questionnaire went from the Jacobsen office to Mrs. Voorhees. What would her life be on Nantucket? How many people might come to dinner? Did she give luncheon parties? How many books would go on the shelves? How many pictures would go on the walls? Jacobsen says the dining room is the key: if twelve is your limit at dinner, that means

(Text continued on page 164)

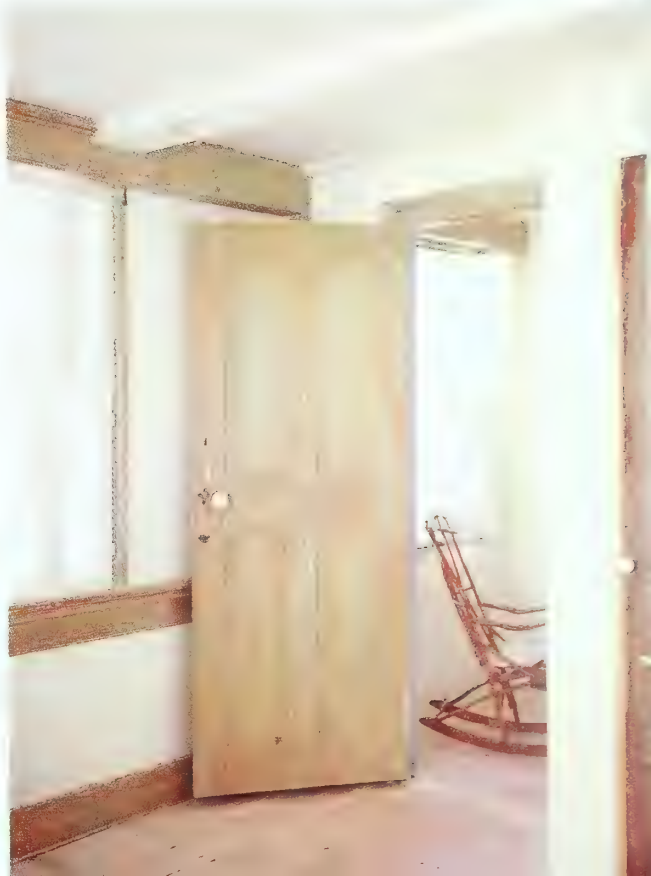
In the living room Jacobsen put in paneling around the fireplace to conceal a bar, closet, cabinets, and a door to a stairway. He designed the blue-and-white Brazilian granite table between the chairs covered in heavy natural canvas. Original wainscoting was painted bayberry, and shutters were put on all the windows.







Eugenie Voorhees found the brushed-steel French park chairs, *opposite,* for the 18th-century English stripped pine table in New York. *Above:* The stairway to the three bedrooms was refinished. *Below:* Eugenie Voorhees stripped all the doors herself, including the one that leads to an upstairs room.







The hall bathroom, *opposite,* has been left old-fashioned and simple. *Above:* In the master bedroom an Italian reproduction of a steel chaise longue is in front of paneling put in by Jacobsen. *Below:* The tables on both sides of the bed were also designed by Jacobsen.





A DACHA IN FINLAND

Where the Gullichsen family spends the idle hours and light nights of summer

BY ELIZABETH GAYNOR

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KARI HAAVISTO

A romantic retreat by the water's edge has played summer home to four generations of a family brought up in the western coastal area of Finland. In the late 1800s, when the nearest town, Pori, was one of the largest export harbors in the country, three couples—the married daughters of a local shipping family—bought neighboring properties to provide themselves and their children with the seasonal pleasures of a simpler dwelling in the countryside. Within a compound large and naturally wooded enough to afford privacy to each home, a yellow wood house with white trim stands in Chekhovian splendor in a grove of birches. This summer dacha keeps alive the aesthetics of country living in the late nineteenth century when Finland was an independent grand duchy of czarist Russia.

From May to September every year, as she has ever since her birth, Maire Gullichsen moves here to Honkala from her main residence, Villa Mairea, designed in 1939 by the world-class Finnish architect Alvar Aalto. Together with her late husband, Harry Gullichsen, Maire Gullichsen is well known as one of Finland's great patrons of the arts and architecture, and the prime backer of Aalto from his youthful days, when his first successes in the new Modernist style foreshadowed the international impact of his uniquely humanistic architecture and furniture design.

It might come as a surprise to design aficionados that such a figure as Maire Gullichsen would choose to



Honkala's wooden garden pavilion, *opposite,* in shades of yellow and white typical of Finnish manor houses, is approached by a path through beds of phlox in pinks and white. *Above:* The bed/sitting room was the master suite when the house was built in 1884. Tufted turn-of-the-century sofa and chairs are comfortably arranged on scrubbed pine floors covered with traditional Scandinavian runners made of wool rather than the customary cotton. *Left:* The view across the back lawn from an upstairs bedroom.

abandon her landmark Modern home in Noormarkku for so old-worldly a sanctuary as Honkala. But her move to summer quarters satisfies on several counts. It represents the traditional seasonal celebration of the dramatic change in climate that all Nordics greet with great enthusiasm and a shift in lifestyle. It is at this time of the year that Scandinavia becomes an abundant garden that nature pays back in sweet wild strawberries and fulsome greenery what she exacts in endurance through the cold dark winter months. Such continuity in family conventions is consistent with the values of most Scandinavians: a yearly pilgrimage to the summer home of one's childhood, in this instance to the place of one's birth, is resonant of the respect for tradition which permeates life in northern lands—a tradition Alvar Aalto himself was certainly sympathetic to. And through the generosity of Maire Gullichsen, Villa Mairea is now open to the public in July and August, when her displacement frees the grounds and rooms of the house for viewing, with their original furnishings created by Alvar and Aino Aalto, his architect wife, and the Gullichsens' collection of twentieth-century art.

Each year, then, Maire Gullichsen transports herself to earlier times—to her own childhood and her mother's as well as that of her children. "Everything that's a part of life has happened in this house," she muses, "marriages, the christening of children—I was even born here." The family was having dinner when the midwife opened the double doors of an adjoining room to announce her birth. She remembers the evenings of her name day when as a young girl she would throw yellow roses down to serenading callers. And, later, on light summer nights when she would escape down a rope ladder (kept in upper rooms by fire law), "without Father knowing."

Honkala was built in 1884, right in the midst of Finland's flourishing Romantic period. It manages to elaborate on the fanciful spirit of the times even more conspicuously than many great houses of its day. Maire Gullichsen recalls, "My sister always said Honkala is not a house for men. It is so very feminine." The period saw a widespread use of pale-tone furnishings, perhaps a reprise of the Gustavian era of the late 1700s, so named for King Gustaf III of Sweden whose taste for French and English courtly styles was imported to his homeland in a modified version, whitewashed and combined with pastels. In Finland, first a Swedish possession for six hundred years and then for a century a part of czarist Russia, the seductive Gustavian themes combined with the summer-palace aesthetic of the Russian czars—but in more humble terms.



In the spacious living/dining room yellow and white walls and furniture provide a backdrop for a scarlet pouf, which centers the space. Over the tile stove hangs a photograph of Maire Gullichsen's grandfather, who built Honkala, and over the table is a portrait of her mother.









Garden whites, *top,* reiterate the pale summer palette of the house. *Above:* A samovar for afternoon tea at one end of the dining area. *Left:* Looking into a bedroom from a corner of the living/dining room.



Gustavian-style shield-back chairs, *below,* surround the table in the dining area. Old-fashioned farm-woven bleached linen runners crisscross the floors. The fanciful organdy curtains and lamp soften the linear look of leggy furniture and striped rugs. *Right:* A romantic arrangement of garden flowers by Maire Gullichsen.





The interior of the garden pavilion, *above,* has scenes from Goethe painted on the walls by artist Tove Jansen for Maire Gullichsen's fortieth birthday. *Left:* A dreamy corner of the main bedroom with white wardrobe, iron bedstead, rolling cart, and organdy screen. *Opposite above:* Another bedroom with ubiquitous whites complemented by sky blues. It was in this room that Maire Gullichsen was born. *Right:* A skirted washstand in the bedroom sits adjacent to an original tile stove. Such wood-fired stoves heat all the rooms on cool days.





The charm of the resulting interiors lies in their stylish simplification and adaptation to materials at hand.

The creamery colors of Honkala's exterior are typical of Finnish manors and are echoed in the interior rooms' seasonal pales, made even paler with lots of white. In the all-of-a-piece summer style of the nineteenth century, various suites of dark wood furniture were painted over white, and light-tone wallcoverings (since updated) were chosen with the long radiant days in mind. Islands of white linen-draped tables and chairs form the conversational hubs around which coffee and cakes are served to visitors, meals are eaten, and evening reading or games are taken up by children and adults. Runners stripe the floors in the old-fashioned Scandinavian manner; gentle toiles, stripes, checks, and prints cover characteristic wood settees and chairs. The woven textiles came from the Home Craft Shop, one of those started about this time in parts of Scandinavia in the interest of preserving traditional farm skills. Natural northern pine floors, scrubbed seasonally in the customary manner with willow-root brushes and a mixture of sand and water, underscore the summer-light look. Two bedrooms, a bed/sitting room, and a sun porch that spans the back of the house radiate off three sides of the large, convivial living/dining room. Upstairs a similar plan fans more sleeping rooms off a central hall.

Life in earlier times revolved around summer theater (members of the family acted in a company nearby), crayfish parties, evening readings, and the like. Playhouses with lilliputian *(Text continued on page 162)*



Alice Austen in
1888, at age 2
Looking from the por
Comfort, the Au
house, to the Verrazano-N
Bridge. *Inset opposite*
The house, now
restored as a museum, from
the entrance gate.



THE HIGH SUMMER OF ALICE AUSTEN

Rediscovering the pioneer photographer and her house on Staten Island

BY OLIVER JENSEN PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACQUES DIRAND





JACQUES DIRAND

Summerhouse with roses, *above*, photographed by Alice Austen. *Right:* Her camera, prints, and other memorabilia. *Below:* The marriage proposal, a comical series by Austen featuring two friends, herself, and a tombstone.







PHOTOGRAPHS BY AUSTEN (EXCEPT DOGS) COURTESY OLIVER JENSEN









Alice Austen photographed every aspect of her world and enjoyed posing herself and her chums, as in this group, *above,* in bathing costumes; Alice appears at left. *Top:* The jardiniere-filled front lawn of Clear Comfort in the 1890s. *Left:* Alice's dogs on the porch. *Below:* Members of the Staten Island Bicycle Club. *Far left:* An enclosed upstairs porch, crammed with Oriental souvenirs belonging to Alice's aunt and sea captain uncle.



For New York City the view is marvelous and the site matchless, enough to make developers swoon. Indeed it was only at the last minute that the elegant old Victorian "cottage," all gingerbread and vines, its lawns sloping gently down to the water's edge, was torn from the grasp of land speculators. It was with similar desperate timing that the gently born lady of the house, arthritic, bound to a wheelchair, and penniless at 85, was gotten out of the poorhouse. In the bleak domestic tragedies of Charles Dickens the obligatory happy endings are provided by such devices as the sudden appearance of a rich benefactor from, say, Australia to patch everything up. But in the very real story of Alice Austen, the noted photographer, the agent of deliverance was her own superb unknown work, then moldering forgotten in a cellar. As a moral tale, I think with all respect that this beats Dickens.

The Alice Austen House is handsomely restored today to the way it looked a hundred years or more ago. It stands on the easternmost point of Staten Island, now part of the city of New York, and faces the Narrows, the slender strait between the island and the massed high rises of Brooklyn. You can look out to sea past the giant Verrazano-Narrows Bridge or up to the distant skyline of Manhattan. A one-room Dutch farmhouse had gone up here in 1669, or so Alice Austen used to claim, just after an English fleet had come through the Narrows to con-



vert New Netherland to New York. It had grown by accretion when the last British troops and a great many unhappy Tories gathered on Staten Island after the Revolution and then sailed away forever. In the early nineteenth century the farm belonged to a man named Lake, whose pretty daughter Sally was being courted by a rather crude but ambitious young Staten Islander, Cornelius Vanderbilt. Corneel was beginning to prosper in the ferry business. Investing in a modest diamond ring, he came one day to the house to seek Mr. Lake's permission to propose. When Lake refused, remarking that the suitor's prospects seemed rather poor, Vanderbilt produced the ring and scratched her name and his initials on a small windowpane to prove it hard and genuine. Sally's father was unmoved, chuckled Vanderbilt as he told the story many years later to John Austen, Alice Austen's grandfather, who bought Lake's old farmhouse in 1844. Austen named it Clear Comfort.

No piece of glass survives to verify the anecdote, related by the man then *(Text continued on page 166)*







Before a friend released the shutter, Alice (wearing a dark jacket, on the third court) joined the crowd, *left,* at the Staten Island Cricket and Tennis Club. *Below left:* A self-portrait taken on the porch, 1892. *Above right:* Gingerbread detailing of the house. *Right:* Interior with an Austen photograph. *Below:* The parlor, with Alice's view of the same room, 1897.





A PAINTER'S GARDEN

Robert Dash describes the transformation of his double barn, two shacks, and farmland into a glorious mecca for gardeners

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICK HALES



Palette of soft and rough forms—Nepalese columbines, heuchera, white violets, tulips, Scotch broom—along path to guest room. Door is often painted different colors during growing season.





Beams in the summer living room, *opposite,* are of shipwreck timber bearing the date 1740. Furniture is covered in artist's linen. Painting, *Obregado,* is in the author's current style. *Above:* Beyond the music stand, left to the author by Gladys Swarthout, the inner garden—the oldest part—in high summer.

In early June 1966 I took title and deed to an acre of Gilbert Rogers's farmstead on eastern Long Island. On it—above pillowing meadow grass and beneath a puffy sky shot with red-winged blackbirds whistling "Territory! Territory!"—stood a double barn of shipwreck timber and two derelict shacks. A silvered gray and green canvas of quintessential American cast, a garden, if you will, as perfectly made as if it had been made. Often it seems to me that what I have now will never be as fine, but gardeners can't help fiddling. And for me gardening comes right after painting. My earliest memory is of my mother in a white dress and white hat bending over the bluest German iris, quite enough to put a permanent trowel in my hands.

The first year I wrapped the shacks around a hall, making an L, and attached that letter to the larger of the two barns. In the second year I began a garden in the cove that it all made by putting in a little pond. Three years later I detached the smaller, second barn and moved it to the far side of the property (now 1.91 acres) and began all my doings in earnest with two studios and two houses, a pair for the cold months, a pair for the warm, half a year in each, moving from one to the other at planting and harvest times. From one I see the fierce line of the Atlantic, from the other the long hook-shaped pond that turns Bridgehampton into Sagaponack.

However much I encouraged cultivated forms, I also kept wildness in two roughly circular meadows and allowed goldenrod to reconnoiter wherever I thought it appropriate. I am particularly fond of one form whose Latin I cannot remember: botany is all names, not powers, according to Ralph Waldo Emerson. It is a shortish, gray-leafed, flat-topped, open-blossoming, honey-scented goldenrod that attracts hundreds of monarch butterflies each unfailing September. No fence, I found, was ever so fine as a line of joe-pye weed purpling this gold. Moreover, I had no fixed paths until several years ago, making them instead on whim with the mower and later with tinted concrete sets plunked down on the grass, blocks that were moved out of the way when plants I planted took on mature formations.

In the beginning the garden was monitored by a





Three-panel screen, *From Blue Hills,* 1966, hangs at eastern end of summer living room. To right of 1868 cast-iron stove from Geneva, New York, a cutout of Dash by Alex Katz. Amethyst grapes in English satinware cup are Brazilian.





nearly empty purse so that the most available, least costly plant matter was the only sort employed—privet combined with Russian olive, black pine, and Arctic willow, the last two supplied each spring in lots of one thousand by the Department of Environmental Conservation at twenty dollars a bundle. How many thousands I planted—two, sometimes three, to a hole for competitive vigor and restless, complicated trunking! Close spacing made them take off even more. I began the business of pruning so that each species was made to serve a multitude of forms. Skinning off side issue, for example, would make one black pine a more sculptural specimen in the row with wonderfully elongated branches. All trees have beautiful bark, even when young. Trunks, when wet, come forward to the eye, and early dawn becomes especially fine when it rides with morning dew down to the earth. Claustrophobic hedges were stripped arm-high from the base of laterals, creating a grove of trunks stained leaden and blue by lichens with the tiny, sad vanilla-scented lilacs of the privet swarming above them in June and July. Most other plants were grown from seed, including *Paulownia tomentosa, Clematis tangutica* and *C. recta, Lobelia cardinalis,* and Nepalese columbine, seeds of which I have sent to many gardens. I grew species roses from seed. Seven red cedar volunteers were transplanted to the all-goldenrod meadow where they have made a columned darkness in which mourning doves nest and sob. I lifted gone-wild asparagus from the north hedgerow and brought them back. I became unembarrassedly persistent in begging cuttings and even once stole one for which, I must confess, I feel not one ounce of shame.

As green is, of course, the preeminent hue of all gardens, I have tried to enlarge its repertoire by disregarding categories. Vegetables then and vegetables now are mixed with flowers and bushes. Cardoons support delphiniums, chives husband roses, scarlet runners twine with hops. White clematis fall from holly, and wisterias go up an apple tree. Sempervivum mixes with lemon thyme, burnet grows beneath the lilacs, and wild strawberries, garlic chives, elephant garlic, sage, and mint thread among the bushes. Second-year leeks are potted each year on the terrace for the sake of their bluish foliage and the boned mauves of their umbels. In one of the meadows peonies mix with rue, rue with chicory, chicory with broom, broom with daylilies, and the whole is ruled by tall timothy and thistles through whose dry stalks bulbs spring like resurrections.

If the garden prospers on a seam of constantly enhanced Bridgehampton loam, one of our finest glacial alluvials, feet deep and stone free, the far rarer river of poetry goes through what I paint and what I plant and how I react to what I see and what I do. I frame the poems of friends, works written at Madoo (Scots for "my dove") about the land, the garden, the weather, sometimes my work. They hang on the walls like small canvases and I catch lines from them as I go in and out.

Although I am always reading garden books, I do hate to take advice and I prefer to learn by my own willful blunderings. A fact gained from the trowel means so much more than one lifted from the page. The garden is always changing. Every morning, especially in winter, I come awake with new plans much as, after a loneliness, one may start a new love affair. What I have learned from the past of my garden is the ability to see failure as a most provocative, fertile workshop. I speak this way as I would about my own personal life because one's garden is as much a part of one's biography as is one's signature. I do wish I were less untidy and better pruned, but our gardens ought to be as various as we ourselves are. Whether the garden has high or low objectives, is precise or imprecise in its results, is finely or roughly made, the question is always how well one has used the gift of time. It comes as a hard surprise to me to find that I have been at this garden twenty years. I thought it was yesterday when I began painting for an hour, gardening for half an hour, then back again, so fresh is this rhythm. □

Editor: Babs Simpson

Privet pruned to unexpected grace, *opposite,* one of Dash's specialties. *Above:* Still life becomes biography: bouquet of Dash's earliest garden tools above painter's work clothes.





















Lessons in the art of placement outdoors and in. *Top row, left to right:* In the courtyard, Nepalese columbines and white marble pedestal from a Long Island church. Painted tin pot and pochoir by Dash balance works by Goodnough, Tamayo, and Kulicke in main bathroom. 'Dortmund', a Kordes rose trained up a post, frames view of path. *Middle row:* Winter house living room. Grove of black pines for shady sitting. Fire screen from Gallatin House on Washington Square in the summer house dining area. *Bottom row:* The main pool outside the summer studio. *Sparmannia africana* in a Georgian chalice in front of *Corms,* now in the collection of Mr. and Mrs. José Soriano. A powerful illustration of organic gardening at its peak.



To the left of guest room's English castle door, framed poem by James Schuyler; to the right, three pencil sketches and an oil by Fairfield Porter. *Opposite:* Seven-foot-high rugosa hedge flying off to potato fields and Atlantic Ocean.







WELSH COMFORT

Lady Lisburne brings light and color to Cruglas, the family's ancestral house

BY DAVID BRIERS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
FRITZ VON DER SCHULENBURG



The drawing room where Lord and Lady Lisburne and frequent guests take their ease. "Comfort is *the* thing," she says. Corner cabinets display early-19th-century botanical creamware. *Opposite:* The 1740 house.

The clear distinction between clutter and plenitude is



The decoration of the drawing room began with trompe l'oeil moldings and wall finishes by London artist Jim Smart. Chintz is from Colefax & Fowler; cotton on French bergères from Tissunique.

the distinguishing trait of Lady Lisburne's decor



Walking sticks, rucksacks, and hats for all weather attest to the owners' love of the countryside and recall Cruglas's origins as a farmhouse on the family estate. Beyond is the front hall.

Heirlooms combine to give the room a mellow welcoming mood



Beyond the pasture, *opposite,* lies the vast Tregaron Bog, now a nature reserve. *Above:* The dining-room table is set with hand-beaten gold plates, made for the family by the 19th-century goldsmith Lady Amhurst. *Left:* Against a garden wall are tools and a slab of slate.



Sitting on the terrace in the May sunshine at Cruglas, Lord and Lady Lisburne's house in the rural depths of mid Wales, the peace is almost overwhelming, as if all one's mundane troubles were draining away into Cors Tregaron, the large peat bog that the house surveys. Bullocks low, bumblebees hum, and corncrakes do whatever they do, furnishing a calm accompanying soundscape intermittently pointed up by the whistling wing tips of wild duck in flight overhead. Turning back into the house itself, it is immediately evident that Lady Lisburne, who is an interior designer with an international clientele, has opted likewise for an ambience within which it would be difficult to feel ill at ease with the world.

Guests at Cruglas always long to go back, but the transformation of the house ten years ago signified a return of quite a different caliber. It marked the return of the house to the family to whom it had belonged—except for a relatively brief hiatus in its recent history—ever since it was built in 1740. The Vaughans ("not a very grand family," its descendants will tell you) have lived in this place ever since halfway through the eleventh century, and in the large tome at Cruglas documenting the family genealogy the lineage makes its way simply but potently down the first page by way of names that might have been made up by J. R. R. Tolkien, like Marchwithan, Marchwistle, and Yesterwith.

Nowadays this is the zealous Bible belt of Wales, where Welsh remains firmly the first language of most people. The postal address of Cruglas gets progressively longer line by line, terminating in a seventeen-letter word which to the non-Welsh speaker looks as though it could be rearranged into a well-known phrase or saying but which actually means the "bridge near the ford of the Blessed Virgin." Nearby are the haunting ruins of Strata Florida, the abbey that has retained its medieval Latin name. It is a secret, magic land, and the Tregaron Bog, now a carefully protected nature reserve, is one of its wonders, home to rare birds, butterflies, and plants. In winter, when wild horses graze there, it



The master bathroom, *above,* carries out the blue-and-white theme of the master bedroom. *Below:* In the bedroom are bookcases by Michael Lally. Blinds and armchair in chintz from Warners, that of writing table from Brunschwig. *Opposite above:* The 1740 four-poster bed has quilt fabric from Tissunique; print from Warners. *Opposite below:* A corner of the garden.

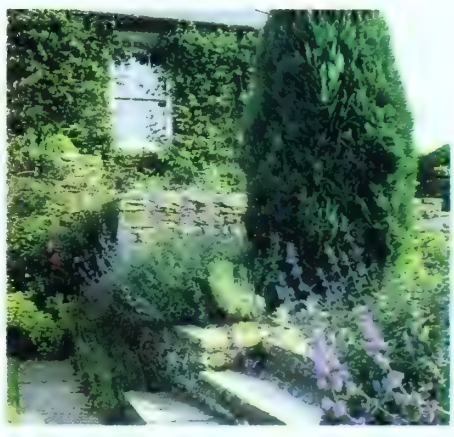


The wakening sleeper is greeted with a view of Tregaron Bog

takes on the aspect of the Camargue.

In the study at Cruglas is a marvelous painting by Algernon Newton of Crosswood, the original family seat a few miles away. After World War II the seventh Earl of Lisburne sold the estate (Crosswood is now the headquarters of the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service for Wales) on which Cruglas was formerly a farmhouse. When Cruglas came on the market again in 1975, the present earl repurchased it. Lord and Lady Lisburne have only occupied the house since 1977, a year now commemorated by a slate plaque on the exterior of Cruglas by the Welsh sculptor and letter carver Jonah Jones, and the intervening two years were a strenuous labor of love.

Two master craftsmen have left their distinctive mark on the interior decoration of Cruglas. London artist and master paint mixer Jim Smart was responsible for the decorative and trompe *(Text continued on page 172)*





BIEDERMEIER KEEPSAKES

Rediscovering the painted and gilded glassware that toasted sentimental virtues and historic events in Middle Europe

BY NICHOLAS FOX WEBER
PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARK DARLEY

The Napoleonic wars wreaked havoc on daily life in nineteenth-century Europe. Once there was peace, the newly prosperous middle classes of Germany and Austria sought the reassurance of family life as a refuge from an unpredictable world. It's a sentiment we can well understand today.

The decorative objects of the Biedermeier era celebrated to the utmost the pleasures of family life. If the furniture of the period is notable for its Classical line and lack of ornament, the glassware announced the bravura of commemorative occasions. Produced largely as keepsakes to celebrate wedding anniversaries and birthdays, it was elaborate in design and exquisite in execution and it introduced to the medium an unprecedented intensity of color. Like most precious objects, it is now so rare, especially in the United States, that only one or two dealers have anything to show, and its appearance in collections and publications is an event of note.

Scarce as Biedermeier glass now is, it was produced in profusion in Austria at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Glassmaking at the time was a major industry that employed about 40,000 people. There were 66 glass factories in the kingdom of Bohemia putting out 11 million florins' worth of glassware a year. About half of it was exported. So not only was the glass widely used

Bohemian beakers, *opposite,* depicting Rinaldo and Armida, at left, and Napoleon at Wagram, right. *Above:* Bohemian lidded goblet, c. 1850. All courtesy Wiener Glassalon, E. Skalitzki.





within Bohemia itself, but it also enhanced the prestige of the kingdom abroad.

In the peaceful and conservative years following Waterloo and the Congress of Vienna, the middle classes enjoyed a lifestyle of congeniality and plenitude. A profusion of objects were meant to elevate domestic comfort and well-being. There were gemütlich musical evenings and splendid meals in carefully appointed, well-proportioned living rooms.

We see it all when we enter the world of Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*. The year is 1835. "There they all sat, on heavy, high-backed chairs, consuming good heavy food from good heavy silver plate, drinking full-bodied wines and expressing their views freely on all subjects. . . . And now came, in two great cut-glass dishes, the 'Pletten-pudding.' It was made of layers of macaroons, raspberries, lady-fingers, and custard. At the same time, at the other end of the table, appeared the blazing plum-pudding which was the children's favorite sweet." Thomas Buddenbrook fetches two bottles of dessert wine from the "second cellar to the right. . . . And the little dessert-glasses were filled with sweet, golden-yellow malmsey." A guest proposes a toast. " 'Come, my honest friends, let us honour ourselves by drinking a glass of this excellent liquor to the health of our host and hostess in their beautiful new home. Come, then—to the health of the Buddenbrook family, present and absent! May they live long and prosper!' "

The glassware that held those raspberries and macaroons and golden malmsey (the sweetest Madeira) was in all likelihood Biedermeier. It went with the new affluence of families like the Buddenbrooks, and it gave their home its essential aura of luxury. The idea behind Biedermeier was to disguise and embellish to the utmost. As foods were diced and mixed and blanketed with sauces, so glassware was cut and shaved, engraved and painted. Working primarily with the various forms of vessels—drinking glasses and goblets, beakers, tankards, vases, bottles, and jars—skilled craftsmen set about to achieve unabashed splendor. Particularly in the centers of the Steinschönau and Haida, they mastered the cutting, engraving, and finishing of glass in a way that surpassed all that had been done in the medium to date. When the goal was a crystal effect, the goblets glittered like diamonds. When a portrait profile was in order, the subject's face and even his skin tone were captured in the wall of a beaker with rare verisimilitude. The men etched in profile look more than amply fed, their ruffled shirts and velvet collars in perfect order. When a house is shown, it is a large and stately place surrounded by tidy orchards and a good iron fence.



The town of Neuhaus on an ornate beaker from Bohemia, *opposite,* at left. Viennese *Ranftbecher,* right, made by glass master Anton Kothgasser in 1820, is painted in transparent colors, etched in silver-gilt, and inscribed "Be gay and be cheerful for all your living days." *Above:* A c.-1870 glass, a late survivor of the Biedermeier form, depicts flowers and musical instruments.

The idea was material abundance. Here was glassware for people happy to own objects, eager to eschew the elemental in preference for the cultivated. It wasn't simplicity or purity or naturalism that they wanted, but the best that the latest technology and artistic training could offer. They liked glass cut into a thousand facets, suffused with rich color, or enameled and gilded—or perhaps augmented in all those ways. In his glassworks in southern Bohemia, Count Longueval of Buquoy developed radiant black Hyalith glass, and Friedrich Egermann (1777–1864) developed jewellike Lithyalin glass in his workshop near Haida. In Vienna, Gottlob Samuel Mohn (1789–1825) mastered the use of translucent enamel hues pioneered by his father. He painted beakers, rather simple in form, with elaborate scenes of Moorish interiors, the triumphal arches etched in silver and gold. He put intricate cityscapes and genre scenes on drinking glasses only a few inches high. On some he inscribed the notes of the latest lieder, the words added in flawless script. Here were the means by which exotic lands and perfect spring gardens could be brought into the ordinary home at any time of year. Bringing the outdoors inside in a form that can never wilt or wither lent not only opulence but also a sense of simple virtue.

With these everyday *(Text continued on page 164)*

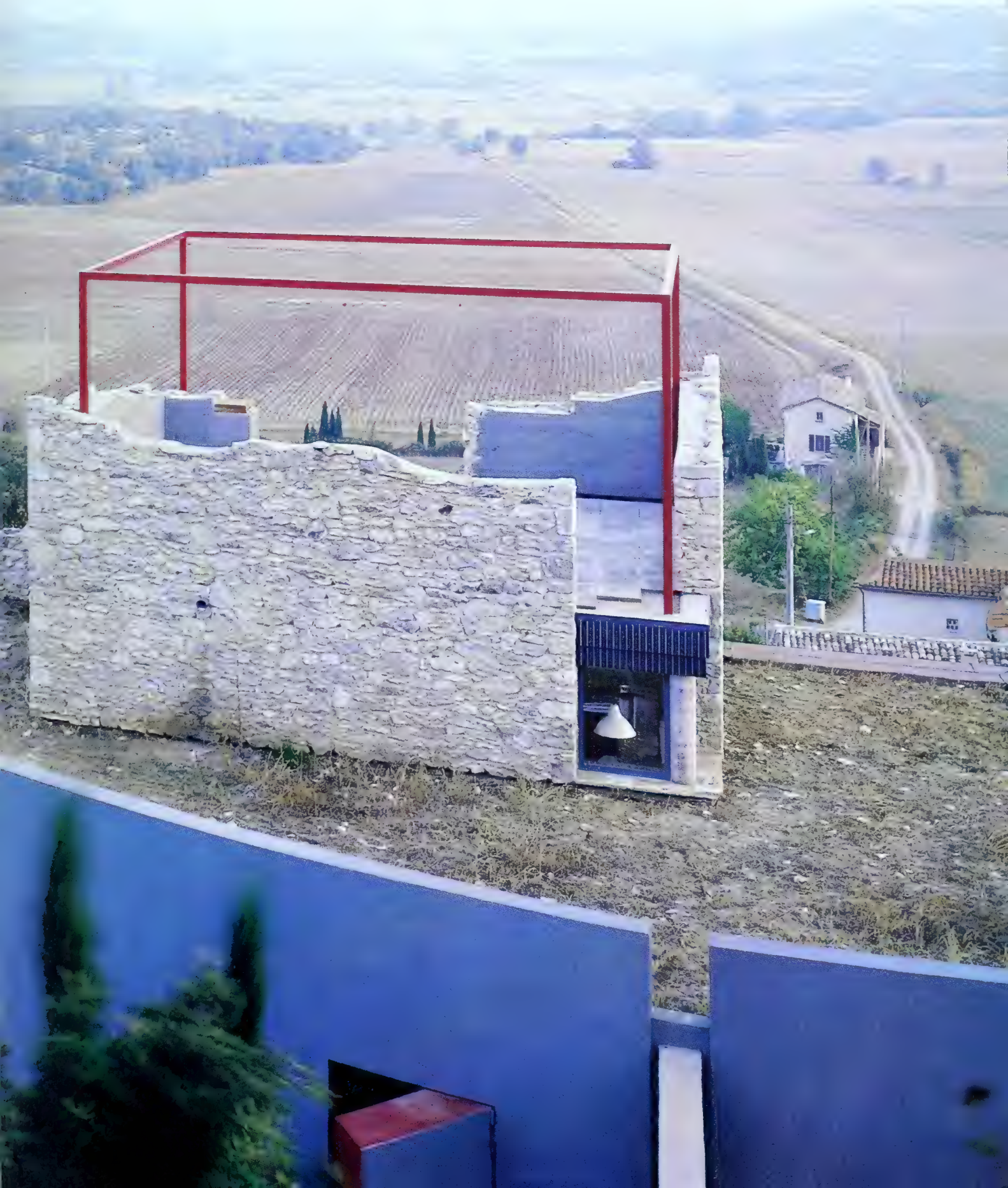
BUILDING ON THE PAST



Architects Catherine Addor and François Confino create a house and studio in the ruins of a Provençal farm

BY CHRISTINA DE LIAGRE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY OBERTO GILI





True to her last name, Catherine Addor rode the tide of her emotions early on. She fell in love at twenty, first with a Provençal farmhouse across the border from her native Switzerland and two years later with François Confino, a fellow student of architecture in Geneva.

There are few twenty-year-old single women who would blow grandmother's inheritance on a huge abandoned two-family *mas*—almost a village unto itself built around a central court in the middle of nowhere. (A *mas* is a large farmhouse where farmhouse and outbuildings are grouped beneath tiled roofs slanting in all directions because of their organic growth.) Putting down roots in a *garrigue* north of Nîmes around Uzès was pioneer stuff. As one of the poorer, more isolated and austere parts of Provence, it was inhabited mostly by flocks of sheep and goats put to pasture on short dry grass struggling amid patches of wild aromatic plants. Goat cheese, a local specialty, and the *méchoui,* a barbecue of whole roast sheep, are staples on the Confino menu. The closest store is twenty kilometers away in Uzès.

When 23 years ago Catherine succumbed to what she calls a *coup de foudre* for the house, almost the only change that had been made since 1714 was to replace a bit of faulty wiring. Water had to be drawn from a well outside the courtyard door. Only a few downstairs rooms were vaguely livable since, typical of any *mas*, the second floor was an attic used only for grain storage. Most important among the sparse furnishings that came with the house was a child's rocking horse put to good use over the years by bronco-busting brothers, Raphaël, sixteen, and Bastien, nine, with their little Godiva sister, Léonore, five, bringing up the rear.

At 43, Catherine is still a true trailblazer. When her new Citroën station wagon stalled repeatedly on the deserted country roads as we made our way from the Avignon train station to the village of Lussan, undaunted she grabbed a white parasol from the back seat, popped up the hood, and gave the motor a few strategic pokes.

Catherine, who grew up in a small Swiss mountain village where winter snows lasted a long six months and whose life seemed as charmed as the music boxes her father made, couldn't wait to head for the Midi, where the noonday sun seems forever high in the sky, burnishing the landscape gold. "When the green is fresh, it is a rich green we rarely see in the north, a soothing green," wrote Van Gogh in a letter from nearby Arles. "When it is burnished, covered with dust, it does not become ugly for it, but the countryside takes on gilded tones in all the nuances."

Miraculously the view from the *mas* has remained unchanged since the day she bought it with grandmother's 6,000 francs ($1,000 today)—an investment that has gone up 200 times. On a clear day—and most of them are crystalline thanks to the raging mistral winds—one sees from their property a limitless expanse of lavender, sunflowers, and wheat rolling up to the hilltop village of Lussan, a historical site around which all building is forbidden. Most Provençal vistas have been desecrated by the random construction of prefab pseudo-Provençal houses gouging the landscape like so many moths—a phenomenon lamented as *le mitage.*

So what started out as the *folie* of a headstrong young girl is now the Confino family seat and the couple's architectural agency. Their ultramodern atelier, constructed out of a ruin perched on a cliff above the *mas,* is a startling signpost of their unique presence in the region. *(Text continued on page 169)*

Originally an attic for grain storage, the second floor of the *mas, opposite,* is infused with light from new windows put in by Catherine Addor and François Confino. *Above:* The front of the *mas* from the garden with the atelier on hilltop above. *Preceding pages:* A view of the rooftop of the atelier, which perches on the hill above the *mas*—and where Confino used his trademark colors of red and blue—overlooking the sweeping panorama of the countryside around Lussan.



The wall of the old *mas* is converted into the atelier of Catherine Ardito and François Confino. Architectural files are kept in the brown boxes. *Opposite:* The kitchen in the *mas* has an old terra-cotta chimney from Alès used to support the open-fire stove. The bread oven, below, was found in the nearby hamlet of Beth.









Rock of the ruin, *top left,* combined with steel and glass becomes part of the atelier bathroom. *Top right:* A window from the playroom of the *mas* projects light down into the old kitchen. *Above left:* An old rocking horse sits in fireplace in master bedroom. *Above right:* In the remodeled part of the *mas,* a metal stairway leads from playroom past Catherine Addor's studio to children's rooms upstairs. *Opposite:* A lush fig tree, which bears fruit in summer and autumn, is in the interior court of the *mas* off the kitchen. Doors lead to garden in front of the *mas.*





BACK COUNTRY GREENWICH

Sister Parish fills a house with pattern for Henryk de Kwiatkowski

BY STEVEN M. L. ARONSON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY KAREN RADKAI



Sister Parish used a lattice fabric from Lee Jofa on the walls in one of the children's rooms where a painted Venetian mirror hangs to the left of a table designed by Parish-Hadley. A Fonthill cotton is on the chaise. *Opposite:* Sunlight blazes through double-height windows into library and onto the Wilton pattern Stark carpet.

In the living room, *above,* and throughout the house, David Kleinberg of Parish-Hadley worked with Sister Parish to create American comfort with English touches. On the 19th-century English carpet is an English tea table, and needlepoint pillows are on couches and chairs covered in glazed chintz and a woven blue-and-white cotton from Brunschwig & Fils. *Right:* The façade of the house as renovated by Alan Wanzenberg of Jed Johnson–Alan Wanzenberg & Associates.





When I first heard the name Sister Parish," says Henryk de Kwiatkowski, the high-powered aircraft broker (new, used, and converted) and spirited horse owner (polo ponies, broodmares, and stallions, including the supernal Conquistador Cielo and the dazzling Danzig), "I thought she was a nun—a nun who decorated houses. It was at Connie Mellon's and the Sister rooms there were filled with chintz. When I finally met her, I confessed that I went for chintz, too, and old but well-preserved English furniture that had seen good—but not better—days. I told her I wanted a place that looked like a well-to-do Englishman's house in the south of France. She said, 'À la David Niven! *I* like that, too.' "

In fact, Mrs. Parish (nicknamed Sister by her four brothers well before the twenties started to roar) holds the English Country-Look Chair in the American College of Decoration. Her signal achievement lies in translating the well-cushioned nooks and crannies of Mother England for her lost colonies. She can kindle a room with a quilt better than anyone, fire it with a touch of pagan color, or civilize it with needlepoint pillows and crocheted throws. A Sister Parish room is full of felicities—everything that luxury tempered by good taste can bring to flower. She is also a decorator whose blunt impatience with imperfection has been known to intimidate the not easily intimidated. Armed with her arsenal of unsparing experience, moving with her fabled ease of tread, she has held her own—and more—with such clients as Jacqueline Kennedy, Brooke Astor, Ann Getty, Betsey Whitney, and Happy Rockefeller.

Having put her establishment stamp—rather, her patina—first on Henryk de Kwiatkowski's Beekman Place duplex in Manhattan, then on his two villas in the Palm Beach Polo and Country Club complex where decoration didn't stop at the stables (she did those, too), and next on his far-flung beachfront house in Lyford Cay (Nassau is his permanent residence), Mrs. Parish turned to the dwelling dearest to the horseman's heart: a handsome fieldstone lodge in the back country of Greenwich, Connecticut. (Somewhere in the middle of these successive com-





missions Mrs. Parish gave de Kwiatkowski the ultimate accolade. She named one of her signature pekes after him, and indeed, as she was showing me through the house, Henryk trotted straight to the master bedroom.)

The de Kwiatkowski house sits on 80 of the 1,500 well-husbanded acres that once made up Conyers Manor, a working farm/country estate, and that have now been generously subdivided, the apple orchard turned into a world-class polo field on which the pan-hemispheric Americas Polo Championship was played last September. De Kwiatkowski is fortunate in having the only grouping of farm buildings left intact—massed, as on an English estate, for picturesque effect. The house he uses for his main quarters stood first as the six-bay manor garage. Designed in 1903 by the well-known estate architect Donn Barber, it was built from stone quarried right on the property. It has been restored with sharp restraint by architect Alan Wanzenberg, partner in Jed Johnson–Alan Wanzenberg & Associates in Manhattan. Mining the richness in the vocabulary of the original building (fretwork balconies, flaring rooflines, hanging rafters decorated with horse-hoof silhouettes), Wanzenberg also designed a 7,000-square-foot addition, consisting of two wings: one for kitchen, garage, and servants quarters, the other for master-bedroom suite, guest room, and double-height library.

The library affords a lateral view of the 22-stall Shingle-style polo barn that Wanzenberg fashioned in the spirit of the house. The two apartments in the

stables here, too, were decorated by Mrs. Parish; de Kwiatkowski lived in one of them while the house was being remodeled. It's an active, open house—the six bays are now three pairs of facing French doors. Horses are in the air. There is always the sound of drumming hooves—*quadripedante putrem*, in Virgil's onomatopoetic phrase.

Anthony Powell has written somewhere of the "mystery which dominates vistas framed by a ruined door." Nowhere is this romantic notion more palpable than in the ruin of the magnificent half-acre dairy barn located within a thousand feet of de Kwiatkowski's house and built of the same loose generous stone, "worn to silver and yellow through years of weather." Here the dairy herd was housed, which pro-



In the master bedroom, *left,* English chinoiserie lacquer boxes flank the Regency mirror over the mantel. A George II highboy is at right. *Opposite below:* The 18th-century Chippendale bed and the chair in the master bedroom are covered in Stroheim & Romann cotton. *Right:* Another view of library, with 19th-century Chinese table and French ink drawings over the sofa. Lee Jofa fabric is on chairs. *Below:* In a corner of the living room a Parish-Hadley mirror hangs behind the chaise longue.







duced thousands of gallons of milk and cream for the manor and for sale; butter was made and packed; and hay was stored in the loft beneath the fanciful dormers and vents. Today the site evokes an archaeological dig. "I will retain and protect the ruin," de Kwiatkowski vows. "I will turn it into a tennis pavilion, and there will be a greenhouse around it—all within the outer frame, which will act as retaining walls for tennis balls.

"In all the other homes I have," says de Kwiatkowski, a Pole by birth and a Canadian citizen, whose own addresses could fill a Rolodex (in addition to those already enumerated, he maintains residences in London, Paris, Monte Carlo, and Buenos Aires), "I don't feel a tenth of the warmth and sense of belonging that I do in Greenwich. I actually feel that I've *been* there before." Allowing that he has in fact spent only the occasional weekend and the odd September there, he adds, "Greenwich is where I choose to spend Christmas. Not only that—I will retire there."

Even the pungent Mrs. Parish turns mellow when she looks back on the project. "It should have been called Go Ahead, because we never heard him say anything except, 'If you think so, go ahead.' We're currently doing a guesthouse on the property—it's our latest de Kwiatkowski work in progress. He said, 'I really want this one to be *me*.' I asked him what he meant by that, and he said, 'Oh, you know—make it look like it was *your* house.' "

Mrs. Parish did go ahead—to London, to spin her latest interpretations of her running English theme. At the crucial moment de Kwiatkowski joined her, bringing to home improvements the same shrewd eye he brings to wingspreads and horse lengths. "I met Sister and her gifted young colleague David Kleinberg at an antiques shop, and Sister said, 'I've chosen eleven pieces,*(Text continued on page 166)*

In blue-and-yellow guest room, *opposite,* the bed, elaborately upholstered in fabric from Clarence House, faces a fireplace with ironstone dishes on the mantel. *Above:* In the blue-and-white bedroom, with a William and Mary chest to left of fireplace, toile from Brunschwig abounds. *Left:* William IV wing chairs in Clarence House fabric complement a Bessarabian carpet in the hall.



CALIFORNIA IN FOCUS

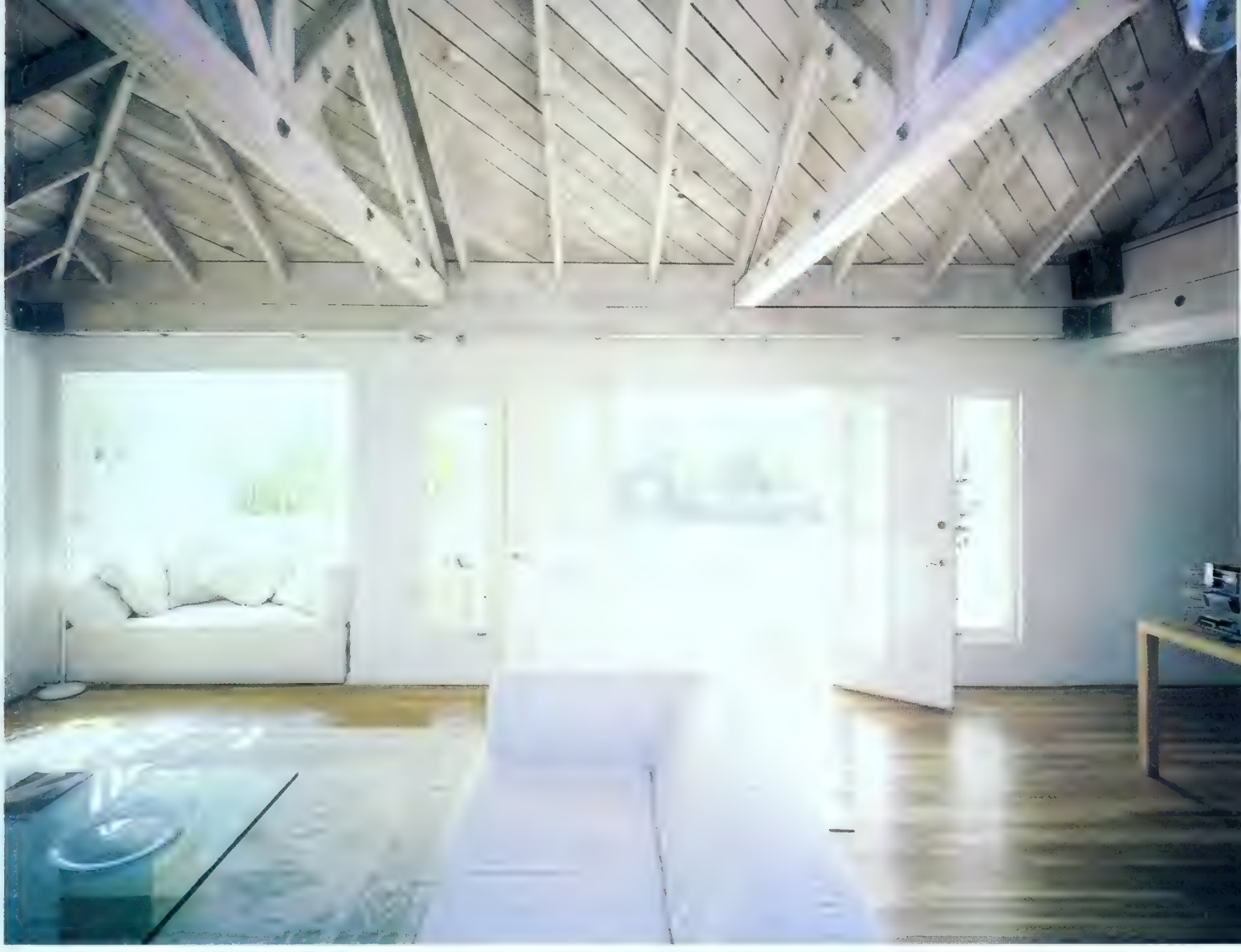


When not in Rome, production designer Ferdinando Scarfiotti lives in a pared-down house in the Hollywood Hills

BY DAVID THOMSON
PHOTOGRAPHS BY OBERTO GILI







Paul Jasmin's photograph, *opposite,* is a touch of black against the all-white theme. Ferdinando Scarfiotti had the heavy cotton slipcovers made for the sofas. *Above:* The living room opens onto the pool and patio area. *Preceding pages:* Through the stair window—put in by former owner Brooke Hayward—a view into the bright living room.

"The house had a certain aura," says Brooke Hayward. "I believe in those things. And this was very positive." Partly because of its location, on a hill above a fearsome city, amid flowers and birdsong, it is like a nook in a beast's ear. You can feel safe from the beast and yet watch what it does.

Brooke, the daughter of agent Leland Hayward and actress Margaret Sullavan, bought the house in 1978, soon after she had written *Haywire,* about the wonder and woes of her childhood and about having survived it all. She had known the house for maybe ten years, when it belonged to screenwriter Buck Henry and his wife. It was not a big house, not so different from a few thousand other unobtrusive gems pushed into the soft hillsides above Los Angeles.

The word was that it had been built in 1940—it might have been a cottage then. Its first owner, movie director John Cromwell, actually made a picture called *The Enchanted Cottage.* And it was rumored that Cole Porter had rented the place. No one was sure when, but it was appealing to think of him wheeling a piano out on the patio—if there was a patio then—and playing "You'd Be So Nice to Come Home To" for friends.

That privileged homeyness must always have been part of the charm. After a day at Metro or wherever, in the light peppery air of the early 1940s, you could have enjoyed the drive back at the close of day all the more for thoughts of that hidden tranquil place above it all. Over the decades Los Angeles has become a darkening plain of labor, haze, and traffic, whence the successful look to the beaches or hills and think of solace, refuge, and the evening.

This house—which was to have another owner after Brooke involved in the world of film—is just above Sunset, off one of those narrow whiplash roads that climb the ridges of the hills. It's one of the houses in the hills not meant to be visible from the road, only imagined and desired.

For over a decade, since the early sixties, Brooke Hayward had owned and lived *(Text continued on page 170)*



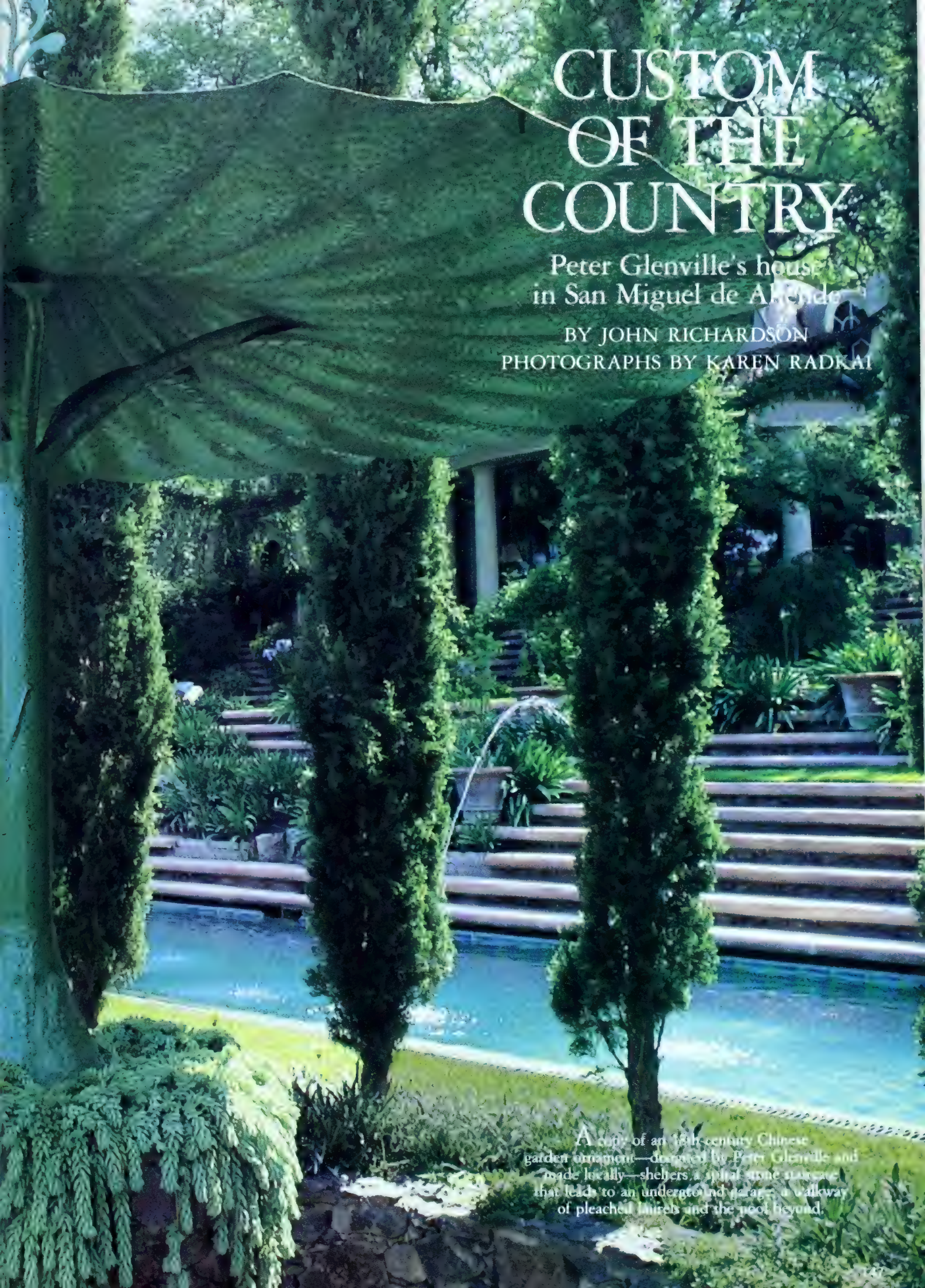
The entranceway gives onto stairs, *above,* that lead to the bedrooms. Scarfiotti, *above right,* in a portrait by Brigitte Lacombe, has created surroundings with a minimum of possessions and objects, a relief from the world of production design. *Right:* A hint of *American Gigolo* in the master bedroom.



CUSTOM OF THE COUNTRY

Peter Glenville's house in San Miguel de Allende

BY JOHN RICHARDSON
PHOTOGRAPHS BY KAREN RADKAI



A copy of an 18th-century Chinese garden ornament—discovered by Peter Glenville and made locally—shelters a spiral stone staircase that leads to an underground garage, a walkway of pleached laurels and the pool beyond.





When Peter Glenville, the distinguished director of plays and films, decided to retire somewhere warm and safe, healthy and quiet, he reviewed all available options. Paraguay tempted him the most, but wasn't it a little far for friends? Likewise Cartagena. Mexico filled the bill in most respects, but where? Certainly not Acapulco or Puerto Vallarta—too touristy. Cuernavaca? Too manicured, too Beverly Hillsy. After a tour of inspection, Peter decided on San Miguel de Allende, the handsome colonial town 140 miles north of Mexico City in the hills of Guanajuato. The climate is perfect: warm at noon, cool at midnight, and, except for the rainy season, salubriously dry. And the place has the advantage of a lively group of expatriates (European as well as American), a nexus of nice Mexicans involved in the

The lacelike stencil on the dining-room walls, *opposite,* is taken from a pattern on the walls of a Baroque *penitentes* pilgrimage church at Atotonilco. A painted Hindu fabric hangs over the fireplace. Guadalajara artist Bustamante made the camel, and the vase on the table is by the well-known Guanajuato potter Gorky González. *Above:* Peter Glenville with Pipila, named after the hero of the 1810 War of Independence.



The glassed-in circular living room of the guesthouse, built by Glenville, is the ideal room in which to have drinks and watch fiery Mexican sunsets. All the furniture and fabrics were made locally.







The parish church of San Miguel, *top,* is visible from one end of the swimming pool on the second level of the garden. *Above:* The exterior of the circular guesthouse on the uppermost level of the garden.

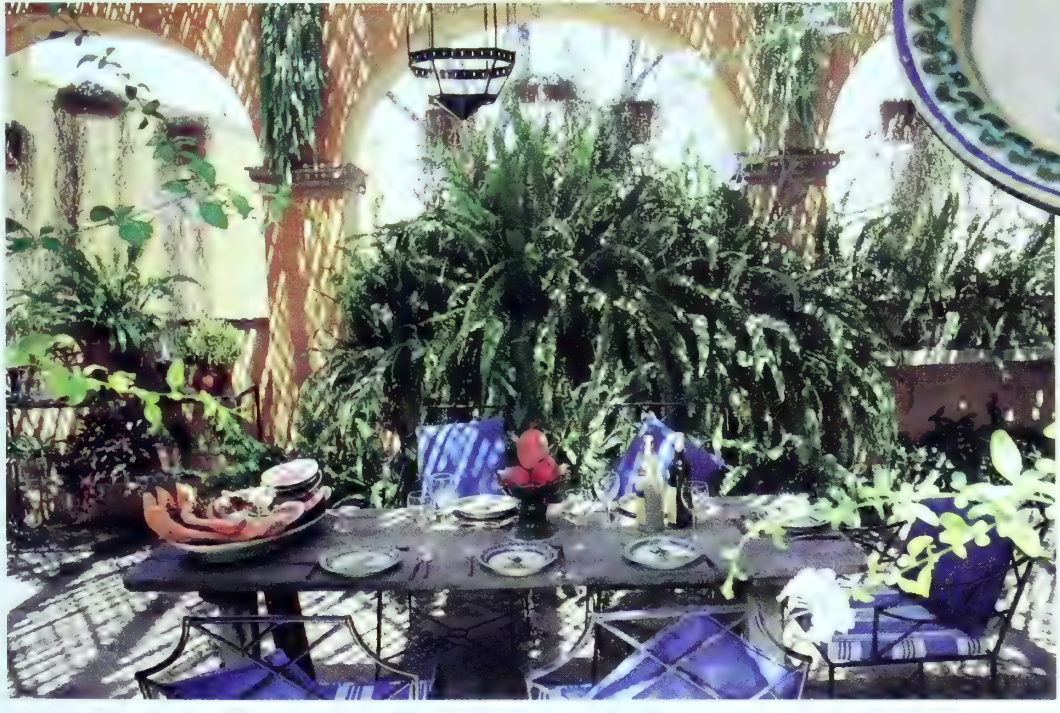
arts, and more than its share of clones and clowns.

The house Peter was lucky to fall upon was only ten years old, but it had been cleverly contrived by a local *entrepreneuse*—the unsinkable Patsy Bubela—to look as if it dated from the height of the colonial silver boom. At first the cinnamon-colored façade—now covered in cascades of plumbago and jasmine—appeared a trifle bare, but what panache this pastiche had. At the back was a small stage set of a garden: a lawn and a fountain against a backdrop of ivied walls and towering cypresses. As for the inside, the airy rooms with their beamed ceilings and handsome, if anachronistic, fireplaces (Mexican houses are traditionally warmed—heated would be too strong a word—by braziers) needed only a coat of paint and a modicum of the right stuff to be habitable.

The problem was *finding* the right stuff. To encourage local industry, the Mexican government forbids imports of furniture unless the importer is a permanent resident, in which case he is allowed one shipment of personal effects. Peter did not want to become a resident, so he was obliged to rely on Mexican sources for all his requirements. Fine for those who want their houses to look as if a mammoth piñata had exploded, scattering too much tin and tinsel, rawhide and bobble fringe, too many shag rugs and sisal placemats dyed shocking yellow or shocking pink. Fine, but not for Glenville, who envisaged a more traditional European style—far from easy to achieve in Mexico.

Fortunately Mexicans make a passable imitation of any artifact in wood or stone, pottery or metal, plaster or gilt. And after a few false starts Peter ended up with unpretentious versions of eighteenth-century furniture—armoires, chests, *bureaux plats,* stools—made to his specifications in both the French and English taste. He also took full advantage of the local potteries: not just the large factories at Dolores Hidalgo, which *(Text continued on page 156)*







Glenville had everything in the sitting room, *top,* made locally. The little ivory of Mary Queen of Scots, on table at left, was a present from Alec Guinness on the occasion of an opening night. *Left:* A shaded terrace outside the sitting room of the main house. *Above:* One of a set of plates of people, animals, and trees designed by Gorky González.



A bed romantically draped in white netting dominates the circular guest bedroom upstairs in the guesthouse. González plates hang on the walls, which because of their shape could not take pictures.



(*Continued from page 152*) produce beautiful *azulejos* (less than ten dollars a hundred)—used here for the swimming pool and a crusader's tent ceiling in one of the bathrooms—but individual potters, such as the celebrated Gorky González. How successfully the incomparable González, the pride of Guanajuato, transcends the limitations of the Mexican folk idiom! It was clever of Peter to have the Dufy-like scenes that decorate his ceramics stand in for paintings on the walls. And then he has been fortunate that this old silver town boasts excellent metalworkers. Casa Cohen, for instance, can copy anything in metal (brass for preference) from Directoire tiebacks to Art Nouveau lamp stands, from Gothic garden furniture to shell-shaped soap dishes. Nor did Peter overlook the local quarries, which provide (in purplish local stone at the price in New York of a plaster mock-up) fluted columns, Palladian pediments, and obelisks galore—although, as Peter disingenuously asks, "Haven't we perhaps *had* obelisks?"

His elegant rooms reveal how cleverly he has made use of these local resources, how he has arrived at a low-key look that is gringo to the extent that it avoids ethnic pitfalls. In only one instance has Peter—who, incidentally, did not employ a decorator—made concessions to local color, and it is a triumph. In the course of repeated visits to the bizarre Baroque pilgrimage church of the *penitentes* at Atotonilco, his theatrical eye had been caught by an entrancing lacelike pattern covering the walls of a ramshackle chapel where the crowns of thorns are stored. He took photographs and had a stencil cut in New York, which enabled a local painter to transfer the pattern to his dining-room walls. Trompe l'oeil lace may sound fussy, but the result, all in grisaille, manages to be solemn as well as pretty—a very Hispanic paradox.

As the original garden was on the small side, he shrewdly made ownership of an adjoining "field" a condition of acquiring the house. The field was little more than a dusty *terrain vague*—about half an acre in extent—but it has a breathtaking view. The steeply inclined site faces southwest across one of those Mexican lakes that wax and wane with the seasons and, beyond that, to an infinity of scrub dotted with



González plates on walls of guesthouse

cactus and mesquite and a horizon line of blue, blue mountains. No less attractive, the field is shaded by an enormous tree whose branches sprawl across the view with a swagger that no scene designer would dare simulate. Peter called in a local architect to do the landscaping, but the scheme—all dinky paths and pondlets—was as whimsical as a miniature golf course: more attuned to plaster gnomes than heroic urns.

I happened to be staying with Peter when these plans were submitted. "Not at all what I'd envisaged," he moaned. I suggested he take advantage of the dramatic slope and consider a more formal garden. Carried away, I roughed out a grandiose scheme in the manner of Pöppelmann: flights of stone steps stretching the entire width and extending the entire length of the field interspersed with terraces—the whole ensemble dominated by a domed *tempio* with arcaded wings on either side. No sooner drawn than decided on. He brought in Donald Jasinski, an imaginative architect from Boston, who came up with a plan only slightly less elaborate than the original suggestion. The actual construction was entrusted to a local architect, Estéban Escalante—a man beyond praise, says Peter. Eighteen months of building went by. Inquisitive neighbors were not permitted so much as a glimpse of work in progress, although an elderly Rockefeller was caught red-handed on top of a rickety ladder taking photographs. Finally in the fall of 1983 the San Migueliños were allowed to see the elaborate belvedere that had taken shape in their midst.

The focus of the new garden is a rotunda standing on Doric columns—a guest folly. On the ground floor is a large glassed-in living room banked with plants—the perfect place to sip tequila and sigh as the sun sinks behind the sierra while the sky goes all the hues of a hibiscus, from sulphur and palest coral to orange and angry persimmon, and the newly planted cypresses in the foreground turn from viridian to sepia to black. As night falls, the fountains lining the pool break into silver arcs. No wonder a friend has dubbed the place Peterhof.

Upstairs under the oeil-de-boeuf roof is a large circular bedroom, domed down to the floor. Peter says he watched with astonishment as a family of regional artisans constructed this tour de force without help of scaffolding. "These *bóveda* builders," he says "would have died out long ago if the Mexicans were not such inveterate church builders." The *bóveda* builders build upward and inward until they have, as it were, domed themselves in. Their secret is a special mortar that dries instantly. What a pleasure it is to lie in bed, bathed in the rosy glow from the bricks, and look out at the pattern of gnarled mesquite boughs dangling with trumpet vine.

Peter has left the planting of this new garden—and much else besides—to his old friend William Hardy Smith, and the fruits of his labors are already apparent. Terra-cotta urns filled with kumquat trees and clumps of cerulean agapanthus stud the great flights of steps—like so much else in San Miguel—of heliotrope-colored stone. Bill Smith has been at pains to limit himself to a cool, very un-Mexican color scheme of blue, yellow, and white flowers—delphiniums, larkspur, hydrangeas, gardenias, and daisies of all kinds. Wherever possible he has planted silver foliage: olive and pepper trees and, of course, masses of lavender. An unusual feature of the garden is a large pet duck, which has a deceptively dog-like quack and goes by the unsuitable name (in view of the eggs it lays) of Lucas.

Peter Glenville's fifteen-year-old house and two-year-old pleasure dome and garden have already taken on an authentically colonial air. Meanwhile he is investing his house with its own history. Distinguished guests fly in from all over the world—the Kissingers, Brooke Astor, Alec Guinness—to work. No question about it, the place has a wonderful tranquillity, but the English usually get the better of whatever genius loci they tangle with. □



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No Englishman's garden is complete without an alpine or rock garden. England's love affair with Switzerland in Victorian times stimulated British gardeners to grow these little jewels from the high Alps

(Continued from page 71) surprising in a country whose climate is usually more comfortable for plants than for humans.

Like Vita Sackville-West, Sir John agrees that plants even in formal gardens should be allowed to spill over their beds. Thus lady's-mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*) insinuates itself between the stone slabs of the walk, as does *Potentilla recta* 'Sulphurea'. Other wanderers such as the pinks and speedwells are similarly encouraged, reinforcing the feeling that here it is the flowers that matter. They are the raison d'être for this garden and thus entitled to some degree of freedom.

We asked Sir John where he got ideas and inspiration for the design of Glencoe. He replied that, as far as he was aware, the design came out of his head: "You've either got it or you haven't!" He further added that the whole process had been continuous over thirty years. "There's no such thing as an instant garden."

Sir John finds it odd that in this country—in contrast to Great Britain—gardening tends to be thought of as a woman's preserve. American men in general, he remarks, seem not to enjoy growing flowers and designing ways to present them for the best visual effect. Since Sir John was born and educated in Britain and maintains a residence and garden in Scotland, he is well qualified to make this observation.

Just after the war, on a lecture assignment for the British government, Sir John met and married a member of the Du Pont family. Glencoe Farm was a wedding gift to the young couple from the bride's parents. First they enlarged the house; then in the early 1950s Sir John laid out the fifteen-acre garden. Later his talent for landscape design and mastering of herbaceous border planting involved him in redefining the British embassy gardens in Washington, D.C., for Lady Wright. His services to the crown were rewarded by a knighthood, conferred on him by Queen Elizabeth II on the royal yacht *Britannia* off Philadelphia during her state visit to the bicentennial celebrations.

Beyond the flamboyance of the herbaceous borders at Glencoe, life for the plants becomes more disciplined—design takes over. Island beds set in smooth well-mown lawns display a never-ending variety of perennials. Island beds, replacing the English traditional herbaceous or perennial borders (a creative design attributed to Alan Bloom), have many advantages. All plants get equal light and all receive good air circulation, thus reducing straggliness and fungal infections. And the plants can be tended and viewed from all sides.

But before we reach the lawns to the southeast of the house, we pass the stable. Beneath its windows is a bed devoted to daylilies—the horses can almost sniff the flowers as they peer out on a hot summer's day. Opposite is a small kidney-shaped bed—a demonstration bed, in fact.

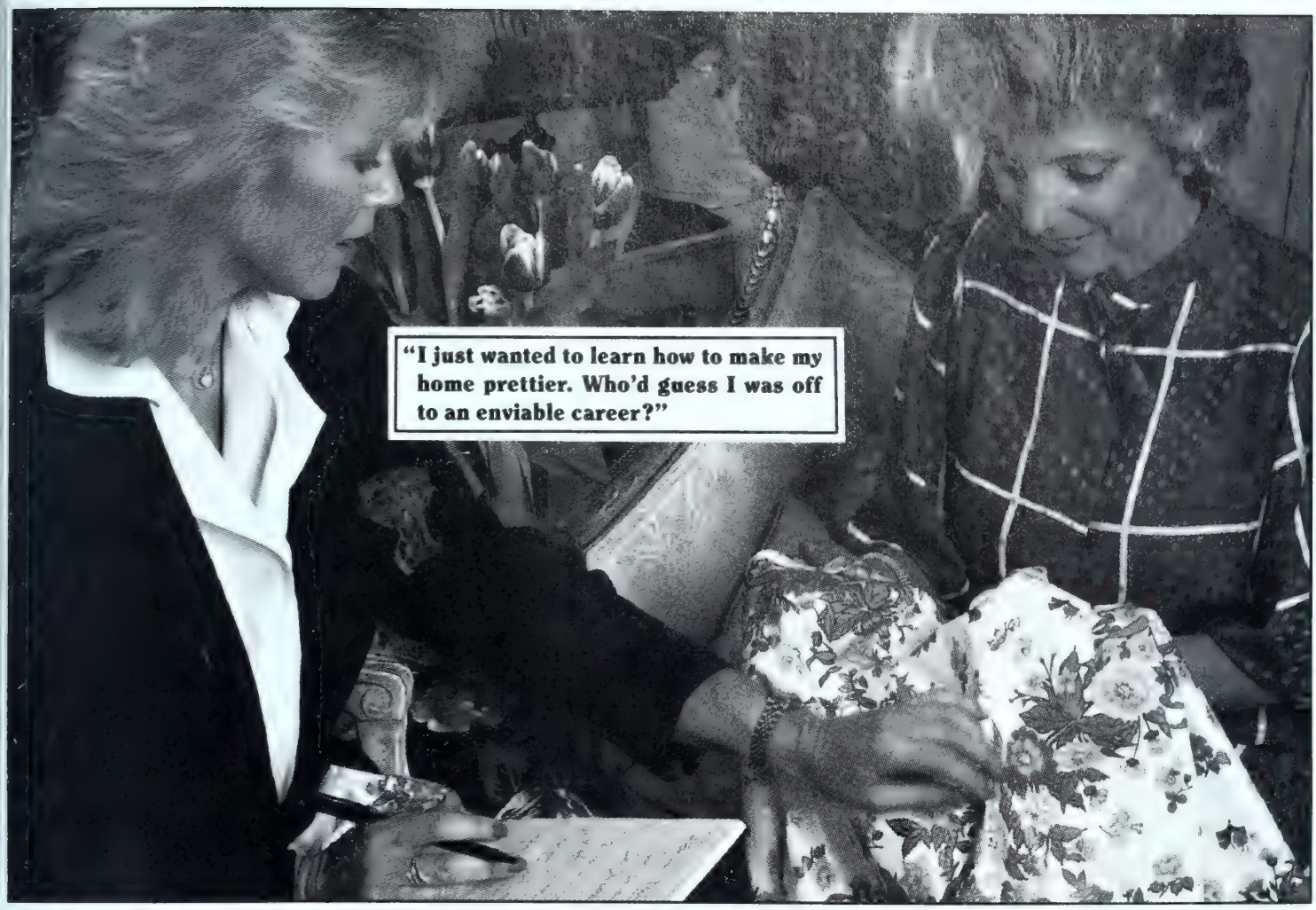
Sir John, tired of visitors declaring acidly that with five gardeners how could he go wrong, has constructed this small plot within the stable wall enclosure to show what one gardener in a small backyard can achieve. The perennials here require minimum care. Around the periphery are low-growing hardy geraniums, speedwells, pinks, the rock rose *Helianthemum nummularium,* and a favorite annual, the coral red *Alonsoa linearis.* In the middle are taller species; these comprise various yarrow cultivars—the pink *Achillea millefolium* 'Fire King', for instance—shrubby potentillas, a nonclimbing blue *Clematis integrifolia,* and, of course, daylilies, the perennial godsend to the part-time gardener.

Immediately outside the stable wall is the so-called dry bed, an island bed about fifty yards long. Several species of the cactus echinopsis give credence to its name. Here are grouped some unusual plants such as the scarlet *Crocosmia masoniorum,* the white *Malva alcea fastigiata,* a hardy lavender verbena, and around the edges a blue tropical creeper from Florida, *Evolvulus glomerata,* which in winter is maintained in the greenhouse. Against the low stable wall a stunning color contrast is provided by a background mass of tall lilies, *Lilium tigrinum,* their orange pink heads peering over a low-growing barberry with deep purple foliage, *Berberis thunbergii* 'Atropurpurea'.

By now it must be clear that Glencoe is essentially a perennial garden. Common annuals, particularly the clichéed surburbanites—petunias, marigolds, and zinnias—are banned. A few, such as alonsoa and especially the verbenas, are tolerated. On a crisp November day we noted a gaily-blooming pale lavender verbena, a hardy cultivar Sir John had selected from a batch of tender varieties.

Mass plantings in two island beds on the extensive lawn display a wide variety of species and cultivars. On the southeast side of the larger bed is Sir John's favorite tree—a specimen beech, *Fagus sylvatica* 'Rotundifolia'. Shrubs and trees are carefully placed on the lawn to frame a series of vistas. A row of fully grown conical lindens disappears into the far distance, bisecting the wildflower meadows that effect an unusual transition from the garden itself to the paddocks beyond.

Despite the current vogue for meadow or prairie gardening, the pitfalls are many and various for the gullible and inexperienced. Here, however, the broad swathes of blue bachelor's-buttons (*Centaurea cyanus*) and red, pink, and white field poppies, blooming their heads off in high summer, testify to Sir John's success. We asked him his secret. "We mostly save our own seed and also collect from the wild. The ground is plowed and harrowed in the fall. If it is a very weedy area, it might be necessary to use Round Up or some other suitable weed killer. I sow half



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the area in October and the other half in spring when the ground is workable. Otherwise, I do not know any secrets of this method of gardening. We use no fertilizers."

Moving back toward the house, we pass the unobtrusive oval swimming pool, unobtrusive since its white shell reflects grays and greens (a blue pool would be disruptive in this setting). At each end of the ellipse is a tall sweet bay (*Magnolia virginiana*), appropriately positioned here since their white fragrant blossoms are produced continuously throughout the swimming season.

Semicircular steps fan out as they descend from the terrace to lawn level. Below each riser clumps of miniatures like lychnis, pinks, campanula, cranesbill, penstemon, and larkspur "soften and romanticize" (in Hugh Johnson's words) this necessary garden feature. The terrace wall is constructed of open brickwork, and there again the masonry is softened by a vigorous growth of the creeping evergreen *Euonymus fortunei,* the whole effect being surprisingly reminiscent of the luxuriant creeping fig of warmer climates.

No Englishman's garden is complete without an alpine or rock garden. England's love affair with Switzerland in Victorian times stimulated British gardeners to try to grow these little jewels from the high Alps. Sir John has the ideal setting for such a garden, a "mountain stream" cascading down a water staircase on the slope leading away from the terrace. On either side lichen-encrusted rocks form niches in which mats and clumps of tiny plants—among others, pinks, rock roses, moss campion, miniature irises,



The creeping euonymus covers open brick wall

saxifrages, anemones, primulas, various small composites, and ferns—flourish. Reaching their peak in April and May, they are secluded from the rest of the garden by rhododendrons, azaleas, mountain laurel, Japanese maple, and viburnums, as well as choice specimens of tall and dwarf conifers. A narrow area of grass between the alpines and shrubs allows the visitor to get a close-up view of these exquisite miniatures. The presence of the tall trees makes this hillside garden a private place—a change of pace and spirit from the mass color of the island beds.

Leaving the stream behind, we now descend into the sunken garden—the next surprise. Nothing could be more different from the alpine collection. Between two stone walls a narrow bed displays giant delphiniums in Chelsea Flower Show style and expertise. Stately Pacific hybrids in pink, purple, mauve, and white rise majestically on their carefully positioned stakes. Only climbers like clematis compete with them for the visitor's attention. These were a great surprise to me—I was under the impression that delphiniums of this size and quality could not be raised in the hot summers of the Northeast. This garden ends the tour as we round the house to arrive back at the herbaceous borders.

Like most enthusiastic gardeners, Sir John is also an amateur plant breeder. We have already referred to his pinks and verbenas, but his serious work is done in the greenhouses with streptocarpus, the cape primrose. These beautiful house plants of the gesneria family come in blues, purples, pinks, and white. Sir John, with justifiable pride, showed us some of his triumphs, all in pale pink shades.

In June, Sir John Thouron gives a big party for friends and relatives to celebrate the seasonal rebirth of this garden in all its glory. Although Glencoe's enchanted period spans the spring and early summer, we did witness one stunning scene in early November, which gardeners in the Northeast might adopt to brighten the winter landscape. Close by the round-leaved beech a group of small willows, *Salix alba* 'Britzensis', had been pollarded into mopheads of brilliant scarlet branches—dark trunks rising from a bed of stark white gravel produced a dramatic color contrast against a winter-foreboding sky. This is only one of many unexpected delights of this relatively small English-style garden, a worthy addition to the famous Du Pont gardens of the Brandywine Valley. □ *Editor: Senga Mortimer*

A DACHA IN FINLAND

(Continued from page 93) porches, gardens, and yards as well as several rooms were built for the children. Today sauna and smokehouse still look out over the sea near a triangular dock that bobs among water lilies in the sheltered cove. Fern-lined paths continue over white bridges leading to a cherry tree or a patch of strawberries and milky flowers beyond a milky gate. Swings around the grounds still provide places to steal away with a good book, and more groupings of tables and chairs furnish several spots for outdoor socializing. A small rose-covered garden pavilion continues to act as an appealing locale for tea taking on cool nights or lazy afternoons. Fourth and even fifth generations of the family are now enjoying such seasonal pleasures. Honkala is a home that proves that the best means of preserving the past is making it live in the present. □

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PURE NANTUCKET

(Continued from page 81) you don't need seating for thirty in the living room.

What emerged from this friendly grilling was a profile of Eugenie Voorhees, and that is essential to an understanding of what was done at 47 Orange. She has friends in for dinner but not too many. She gives luncheon parties. She is an extremely skilled cook. She reads a lot and has a considerable collection of books. She hangs few if any pictures on her walls. She watches television only in her bedroom. She hates clutter and likes the color white. She doesn't believe rooms should be based on fabrics or paintings or objects in the rooms; she thinks rooms should stand on their own.

The first lesson learned by Jacobsen was that the house joiners of the eighteenth-century weren't very good carpenters, despite their reputation as keen Yankee craftsmen. "Only good intentions held that house together," recalls Jacobsen. A steel beam was required to keep the second floor from falling into the first floor. The electricity was primitive, although the piping for gas lamps was in good shape and could have been used immediately.

Orange Street is a busy thoroughfare in summer. The parlor and the master bedroom faced the street. So the axis of the rooms was turned 180 degrees. The new living room opens onto the rear garden, and the master bedroom is above it, on the quiet side of the house. A new kitchen was constructed between the living room and dining room. A bath was installed to serve the two second-floor guest bedrooms. Another bath, with a dressing room, serves the master bedroom, reached by a private stairway.

Eugenie Voorhees was first brought to Nantucket when she was less than a year old, and she has spent part of every year there since. She remembers that in some of the old summer houses the walls were covered with what Nantucketers called matchboard, tongue-and-groove wooden paneling of the simplest kind. She wanted matchboard for her kitchen, but the craftsmen who produced it were no longer available. The new matchboard had to be made to order by a Boston cabinetmaker. Recollections can be expensive.

The long bookcase in the living room was also made to order based on Hugh Jacobsen's design. And a visual trick: because the shelves are only three-eighths inch thick, books in their colored jackets can be moved to the edge of the shelf. The thin shelf vanishes. A wall of color and print is created. In a white room with sun falling across the books, it's a stunning effect.

The color throughout is almost all white of one shade or another, but not everything is that color. Mrs. Voorhees began scraping centuries of paint off doors and discovered that in some cases the original color was a blue gray or a gray green. The doors were hung this way, scarred and mottled, and they startle the eye in these white rooms.

What seems a triumph in this house is the effective evocation of what eighteenth-century architecture was all about. The best of the eighteenth-century was clean lines and few frills. Jefferson and Mozart. Chippendale and Jonathan Swift. There was no heavy furniture and clothing was simple. Hugh Jacobsen says of the architects of that time, "They played with space and light. Decoration, heavy curtains, big pieces of furniture came later with the Victorians. In this eighteenth-century house we tried to get back to the essence of the place."

The unadorned white walls of 47 Orange, its spare interiors, and its lack of period decoration breaks with the orthodoxies of Nantucket renovation. The rooms are airy and uncluttered, comfortable without ostentation. An old friend of Mrs. Voorhees was Billy Baldwin, the decorator, who spent many summers on Nantucket. He said, "Comfort to me is a room that works for you and your guests. It's having a table handy to put down a drink or a book. It's also knowing that if someone pulls up a chair for a talk, the whole room doesn't fall apart. I'm tired of contrived decorating."

There is no contrivance in this house. It is serenely in harmony with its origins and surroundings. It is 230 years old, but it fits. At 47 Orange things are in place. □ *Editor: Babs Simpson*

BIEDERMEIER KEEPSAKES

(Continued from page 123) objects courtly living became the prerogative of ordinary people. You might not own a large jeweled necklace, but you could drink from a beaker the base of which felt like one. In several shops in Vienna, Anton Kothgasser (1769–1851), who was a painter for the Vienna Porcelain Factory, sold beakers with golden rims and beaded bases cut and colored for maximum richness of effect. One Kothgasser *Ranftbecher* (a beaker with intricate borders which has an elaborate cogwheel base) is decorated with a hive and a swarm of bees. Each yellow-and-black bee is individually painted in bright enamel. The hive is done in vivid detail. Angus Wilkie, a New York antiques dealer who has written a forthcoming book on Biedermeier, sees that swarm as a fitting allegory of "honest Biedermeier citizens busily working." The bees' diligence pertains both to the men who made the money that paid for the objects and to the tireless artisans who created the precious glass.

Kothgasser's work knew no limits. On the sides of his beakers were landscapes, city views, ornate interiors, and portraits set in frames within frames and an elaborate sea of decoration. He could show goldfish and exotic birds, floral wreaths and lush bouquets. He rendered ancient myths so that no detail was lacking and illustrated the architectural monuments of Vienna, Innsbruck, and Karlsbad in exacting detail. His especially fancy beakers were gilded not just outside but also within.

Whatever the emotional complexities of Mann's characters, their well-cushioned existence has its charm. There is a cheer to those crystal bowls, an optimism in the ruby reds and golden yellows of the painted beakers. To drink from gold may smart of the establishment, but after trying it just once, it is as hard to resist as the Buddenbrooks' pudding. □



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Yes, you caught Edith Oliver's review of the show.

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(Continued from page 138) you try and find them.' I walked up and down and went, 'One, two, three, four, five . . . These are the eleven pieces.' Exactly the ones she'd picked!"

"Only one thing he refused," Mrs. Parish adds, shaking her head. "A Swedish rocking horse. He didn't understand it." She marvels that furnishing the entire house took only a few hours of his time. "In London we met him at 11:15 A.M. and we stopped at 12:45 P.M. Then there was one other half hour in New York where we took him to shops. Two hours in all!"

Of the treasures that Mrs. Parish garnered for him, de Kwiatkowski particularly prizes a rare 1783 English Neoclassical clock, now ticking away on the Queen Anne Revival main staircase, the Chinese tables and overscale circa-1740 William Kent architectural bookcases in the 20-by-37-foot living room, and his eighteenth-century English Chippendale bed.

"And strangely enough, I love the two little milking stools next to the fireplace in the library. And, of course, my beautiful Renoir for which I paid a record. I have two Monets in New York which are far greater records than the Renoir, but that painting reminds me very much of a daughter of mine, Alexandra, who we nicknamed Lulu. The horse business knows a great deal about Lulu because there's a horse named after her, a horse that has won many, many prizes. I have six children, ranging in age from 15 to 25," says the divorced de Kwiatkowski, "and I named a horse after each of them, and I was lucky enough that each was a winner: Lulu Mon Amour, Michelle Mon Amour, Nicole Mon Amour, Arianne Mon Amour, Conra for my son Conrad—I can't call him Mon Amour, he's a boy, he's my love, too, but I just can't do it—and Stephan's Odyssey for my son Stephan, one of my greatest horses." The children have obviously inherited something of de Kwiatkowski's sentimental bent: for Christmas they baked their father a gingerbread cake of the Greenwich house.

For all its equine and Anglican elegance, is de Kwiatkowski's house literally "fit for a king"? He says with happy anticipation, "Prince Charles is coming to Greenwich in September to play polo with me—I have played with him and against him in England—and he and his wife may well be staying in my house." □ *Editor: Jacqueline Gonnet*

THE HIGH SUMMER OF ALICE AUSTEN

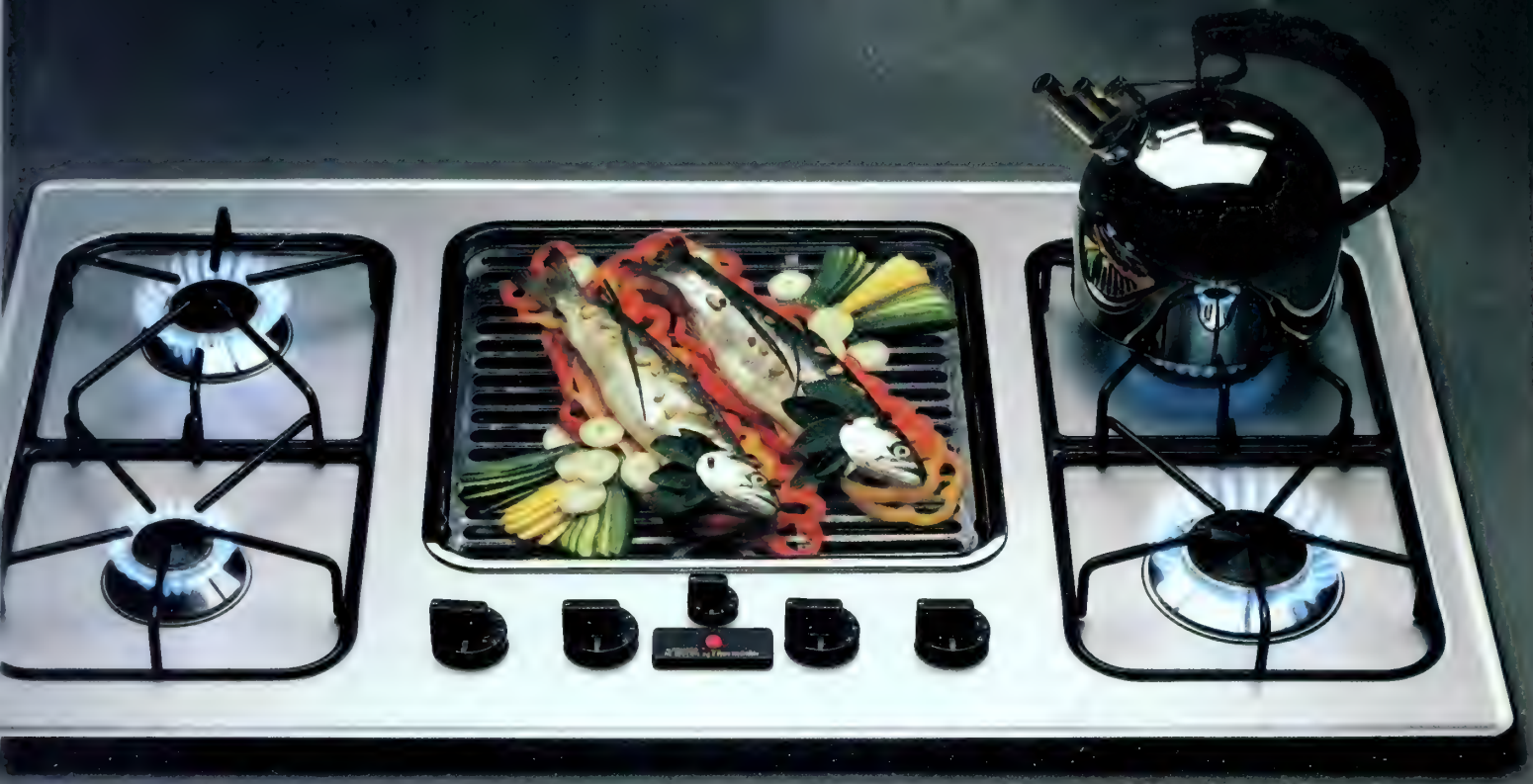
(Continued from page 98) reputedly the richest in America, but three thousand glass-plate negatives, shelved today at the Staten Island Historical Society, have a much greater value. They are what survive of the photographs of Alice Austen, plus some film negatives from later years, and as social history, they are nonpareil. They also prove that, as an amateur who never sold her work, she was one of the most talented American photographers of her day and—among women—one of the earliest. She began working regularly in 1876 at age ten with her sea captain uncle's camera. By eighteen, she was an accomplished photographer with a camera of her own. Photography was an odd hobby for a teenage girl, and it was positively eccentric for a young woman of fashion—partly because the bulky apparatus and plate boxes for a day's expedition could easily weigh fifty pounds.

She was born Elizabeth Alice Munn in 1866, in a cottage not far from her grandparents' house, to Alice Cornell Austen and Edward Stopford Munn, an Englishman who deserted her mother just before or just after the child's birth. The facts were suppressed and his name was never mentioned again. She was called Alice Austen and with her mother moved in to live with the well-to-do grandparents in a three-generation household also occupied by Alice's merry Aunt Minn, the sea captain's wife, and her young uncle, Peter Townsend Austen, who later became a professor at Rutgers. His name celebrated a famous ancestor, Peter Townsend, an ironmaster who forged the great chain that was stretched across the Hudson River at West Point during the Revolution to prevent the king's ships from passing. It worked, and some of the big links were later distributed as souvenirs to relatives and friends. It was a mark of distinction among old New Yorkers to have one over the fireplace, as the Austens did.

A lively, healthy, and curious child, young Alice was from the start the center of the family's attention, surrounded with young friends, among them the minister's daughter and the daughter of the president of the Erie Railroad. The girls swam in the Narrows; had slumber parties, three or four in one small bed; dressed up in the clothes of male relatives, putting on charcoal mustaches—all of which Alice recorded with her camera while everyone was commanded to hold still. She had a long rubber cable extension which she hid behind rugs, furniture, or shrubbery so she could include herself in the pictures. Alice enjoyed balls, weddings, sports, and travel, her camera always with her.

Staten Island, once so rural, now so thickly populated by the descendants of the immigrants who sailed through those same Narrows a century ago, was then a stylish summer retreat—for some a year-round country home just a pleasant ferry ride from New York. Very deliberately Alice Austen went on to photograph that forgotten scene—the mansions and streets and notable events—but she never stopped using her camera at Clear Comfort. She photographed the garden, the lawn in all seasons, the ships that passed through the Narrows, her grandfather on a ladder trimming the vines that grew over the porch, not to mention visitors and friends. With a passion to record everything, she went through her own house, room by room, wall by wall covered with pictures, bric-a-brac, souvenirs, knickknacks—all that vast heavy clutter dear to the Victorian age. She photographed the maids to whom fell the nightmare of all that dusting and also turned her camera on other houses and other groups of all kinds, from dancing classes and ladies at physical exercise to immigrants standing in bewildered groups at South Ferry. She also covered events in the news, such as

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fires and parades, and New York street types—white uniformed sanitation men, police officers, peddlers, and barefoot newsboys.

Her work, straightforward, sharp, clear, and well-composed, has none of the artistic soft focus found in that of other contemporary women photographers, for she was consumed, like a diarist, with a drive to record everything of moment that she saw at home or in her travels. On the brown paper jacket of each plate she carefully wrote the date, the who-what-where, the time of day, the light, the lens, the exposure time. She developed and printed everything herself, with copies for many of the people in the pictures.

So it went through the halcyon decades; not even she was aware that she was creating a considerable historical treasure. The family died off slowly. Perhaps too busy, perhaps scarred by the memory of her father's desertion, Alice remained a spinster, and in 1916 an impecunious good friend, Gertrude Tate, moved into Clear Comfort. For a while there was enough money to support them both, at the house and in trips abroad. But Alice knew nothing of practical finance and, like many others, had invested in the stock market on margin, and in 1929 she was wiped out. They mortgaged the house; then most of the furniture and art went cheaply bit by bit. Alice was an easy mark. Gertrude Tate continued giving dancing lessons while she could, and they opened a tearoom in the house but it failed. Upkeep ceased.

The bank let the women live on without paying mortgage interest, but then in 1944 the house was sold and they received a notice of eviction. As if all nature were conspiring against them, a hurricane-driven tree crashed into the house, wiping out the kitchen as well as the power and the hot water. There was no money for repairs. The two desperate old women, who had been living like refugees in a freezing house on food donated by sympathetic neighbors, were finally evicted. It was an angry tragic scene whose only redeeming feature was the action of several men from the Staten Island Historical Society who managed to cart off the boxes of plates that escaped eviction. At least two thousand others were hauled away by a dealer in used furniture and vanished—most likely as glass for greenhouses, for which the emulsion was scraped off—and thus a great many irreplaceable views disappeared.

The rescued plates went into the dank basement of the Historical Society in Richmondtown, Staten Island, along with one of Alice Austen's cameras and a few other mementos. With the tiny bit of cash from the sale of the house the two women took an apartment, but eventually Gertrude went to live with relatives and Alice to a series of nursing homes. In June 1950 it was all over. Proud Alice, crippled and depressed, took a pauper's oath and entered the Staten Island Farm Colony, a euphemistic name for a poorhouse.

Early in the next year, by the merest chance, I happened to intrude upon this sad scene while writing an illustrated history of American women. My picture researcher, Constance Foulk (now Mrs. J. M. Robert) had sent out a round-robin mailing to small local historical societies, hoping to find photographs never used before. C. Coapes Brinley, who had been one of the rescuers of Alice Austen's plates, answered. Constance Foulk made the trip, and I soon got an excited call to join her. We sat in the basement, holding plates up to a dim light, and knew we had a Golconda, the work, I assumed, of a long-dead genius.

When in further checking I learned that Alice Austen was alive, I made haste to the Farm Colony, carrying along some of the prints we had made in our first selection from the negatives. Soon I was being guided down a long bare room with two rows of beds full of ancient women and screeching radios, the whole suffused with the smell of disinfectant. She was pointed out to me, in a wheelchair by her bed, and uttered no word as I tried to introduce myself. Lost in her own thoughts, she scarcely glanced at me, and I only roused her interest when I rather rudely pushed a few of the large prints under her nose, one by one. Then she fished out her glasses and began to talk about the people in the pictures. Soon she was telling me what I had come to find out, while I, depressed by the surroundings and her tragedy, conceived a plan for getting her out. Her work would do it.

Back we went to the boxes of Austen plates, selecting hundreds more to print, for most of her original ones were long gone or faded. One set of pictures would make a general story about her work and her fate for *Life* magazine, where I had only recently been an editor. We made up others on travel for *Holiday,* still others aimed at women's magazines. Presently there was plenty of money to get her out of the poorhouse and into a private home for the elderly. Gertrude Tate still called regularly, but the new visitor, besides myself, was fame. *Life* not only used many pictures but sent photographer Alfred Eisenstaedt to record her as she now was. That able and amiable man not only caught her near to tears sitting by her run-down old house but he even persuaded the now-revived subject to use his camera and take a picture of him. "Too easy," she said, returning his Leica.

Fame also brought the press and television as well as visitors from the past. Then there was Alice Austen Day at the Historical Society in Richmondtown with a reception, speeches, and punch, and a *Life* photographer again in attendance popping bulbs. "Miss Austen," said C. Coapes Brinley, "we celebrate your recognition"—which said it all. Her health and spirits improved, but time would not be denied; on June 9, 1952, the wonderful old eccentric quietly breathed her last. As the *Herald Tribune* wrote in an obituary editorial, "Now at the age of 86 she has passed on to the family and friends who people her cherished scenes of long ago."

Recognition is what counts, even if it comes at the last moment, like the cavalry in the movies. And it came to the old house on the Narrows in the same fashion, the developers circling the wagons of the devoted volunteers, headed by no less a personage in photography than the late Edward Steichen as honorary chairman. Now the house is a park and a registered landmark. It gleams outside with new white paint; in the interior you can see an exhibition of Alice's views of how it used to be. Study those unbelievable but real and lived-in rooms and the people instinct with life—as if it were yesterday, not a century ago—and marvel with me at Alice Austen, the miracle of photography, and the fragility of life. □

Editor: Carolyn Sollis

The Alice Austen House, 2 Hylan Blvd., Staten Island, New York, is open to the public Thursday through Sunday, 10 A.M. to 5 P.M., May 1 to November 15.

(Continued from page 126) Reactions have varied: some rant, others rave. No one is indifferent. The atelier is, in fact, the culmination of their fifteen-year collaboration on architectural projects, which started with their continuing studies together at Zürich's Polytechnikum and New York's Columbia University for masters in urban design. While François (even their children call them by their first names) continues in the business of building—mostly government commissions—Catherine is off on another track. A year ago she started her own video company, Pas Sage Image, to present new architectural endeavors. Her first effort, *A Toute Villette,* was chosen to be the official film for the much-talked-about new Villette science museum complex in Paris.

The rural *garrigue* backland of limestone hills hardly seemed fertile ground in which burgeoning talent would flourish. But as forerunners there in crashing the gates of tradition, the Confinos are in good company at last. Nîmes, forty minutes away, is now in the process of becoming a showcase for some of the profession's towering talents. France's Jean Nouvel and Philippe Starck are breaking ground with several projects along with foreign master builders Vittorio Gregotti, Norman Foster, Kisho Kurokawa, and Aldo Rossi in a dazzling stand to show that all roads no longer lead to Paris.

Well before Nîmes the road to the Confinos was a much-traveled one, for their studio became a point of pilgrimage in architectural guides as soon as it was completed five years ago. The red metal frame that squares off the top of the ruin it once was dominates the landscape much to the dismay of a retired couple from New York in the valley below. Without it, Catherine says, the ruin, which they partially rebuilt as a ruin, would have been "too nostalgic—it needed a contemporary touch." What interests them is a dialogue between styles with a kind of push-me, pull-you playfulness. "We like the confinements of an old house," says Catherine, as we enter the courtyard through a blue door with a bright red handle. ("There is always an exterior sign that there have been some changes made.") "With a new house, as soon as it's finished, you immediately want to change it." Maybe that's why they call the farmhouse La Fouridale, which means old mother in gypsy French. No matter what you do, the old mother stands true to herself—and you can blame her for what's not right.

The dramatic contrasts between the ancient regional style and the Confinos' sleek design additions start outside-in with the sloping tiled roofs of the *mas* set against the rigid metal superstructure of the atelier. Although nature is allowed to have her way, the Confinos' iron will makes geometry out of organic mass and, time and time again, breaks up the sentimentality of it all. "We went from the fanciful French influence in our studies in Geneva to the rigor of the Germans in Zürich's Polytechnikum. Just living in New York, even more than our studies at Columbia University, opened up totally new horizons."

Indoors the cosmopolitan and the rural cohabit in perfect counterpoint. There are gilded mirrors on rough textured walls. Smooth high-tech stairways take over where the old stone steps leave off. The piano, one of the few family heirlooms they've kept, is treated with typical irreverence. When not in use (all three children have inherited their father's talent), a multicolored plastic cloth is draped over the piano, so it takes on a different keynote in the room, dominating with newfound soft-sculptural importance.

Red and blue metal-frame glass doors and windows have been added, boldly resisting the old stones. It is characteristic of a *mas* to have almost no windows on the north side. Those on the other three sides were just large enough to let in light but keep out the summer heat. One of the Confinos' greatest triumphs therefore is inviting the luminous outside in. A window has even been made in the kitchen ceiling to capture the light pouring into the piano room upstairs—through yet another window carved out of the second-floor stone façade. "The huge fig tree in the courtyard kept the kitchen in the shade, so we reached for the sunlight above it."

The wood shutters outside the doors and windows have been repainted a Provençal blue often found in the region. "Even the wooden carts the peasants used in the fields were painted this particular blue for a reason," Catherine explains, as we chat out front on a



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covered terrace that used to be the pig sty. "It was this blue, they believed, that kept the flies away." By the same token I find out that, according to Provençal lore, the terra-cotta canal roof tiles are different widths because in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries they were shaped over the thighs of young women. And why not? After all, the Champagne cup is said to have been shaped over Marie Antoinette's breast! "Se non è vero, è ben trovato," goes the Italian proverb.

Lulled into a sunset reverie that there is a reason for everything, I query Catherine, who is pastel-perfect in most of her color schemes, as to the origin of the recurring accent on red trim everywhere, delineating doors, windows, steps, or finishing off the jagged silhouette of the ruin.

Suddenly, with the perfect timing of a Swiss watch, François arrives. His field of vision is clear to me at last. He wears glasses. And the frames, of course, are red. □

Editor: Elizabeth Sverbeyeff Byron

CALIFORNIA IN FOCUS

(Continued from page 143) in a Spanish house on Crescent Heights. Her friends loved it, and no one could understand why she gave it up or why she then took another place, on Beverly Drive, and redid it entirely, living at the Château Marmont all the time, and then sold it without ever moving in. "It made me edgy," she says. Which is exactly the opposite of all she felt about the Henrys' place: "I sort of heard, unofficially, that it was for sale. And without hesitation I offered the full asking price. I think it stunned the agent."

The Henrys, she says, had decorated it in a very tasteful way. "But I decided to gut it. I did it with an unbelievable intensity that I know I could never repeat. It was so enticing because of the location, the setting, the terrace, and the pool. I loved the slightly run-down, perfect-bachelor-house feeling. I had a daughter in her teens then, away at school, and it was just right for me."

She hired a Los Angeles contractor, and they went to work. First they reworked the exterior, a space no more than 75 feet deep before the ground falls away and that vast, seductive, but intimidating view begins. Brooke was never sold on the panorama: she put up a pergola and planted fifteen fruit trees to shut it out as much as possible. And she found an old French fountain, a stone lion, the gurgle from which still subdues the hiss of the traffic below. There was a pool, of course, a pool for not much more than pretty fish. She made it a spectacle of mosaic tiles in a hundred shades of turquoise flecked with gold. It worked: when all the intricate work was done and the sun was high, it was as if the colors were swimming in the water.

Inside, Brooke started work in the living room where she had the ceiling torn out to expose the ash-colored beams. The wall between the kitchen and the dining room was knocked out, almost on impulse. Upstairs the bathroom became an awesome cabinet of onyx and mirror. ("It's not a man's room," she admits.) The deck beyond the guest room, or office, was redone. To bring light down into the rather guarded structure, Brooke added a pentagonal skylight in the living room and an interior window in the wall of the stairwell.

"People thought I was bananas," she says. Because there was so much work going on and so many efforts required to get the kitchen and the bathroom right, it was an eighteen-month job. "And I was never so happy with a project. It all had a south-of-France feeling. It wasn't quite L.A."

It was Brooke's habit to have picnic lunch parties around the pool, with guests helping in the kitchen and trying to avoid the building materials. At one of those picnics, in 1978, there appeared a man from the Mediterranean whose response to the house coincided with its completion and with Brooke's renewed urge that it might be time for her to move again—to New York. She was out of love with Los Angeles, no matter how much the house pleased her. He was delighted with what she had made of it. And she was flattered, she allows, that *he* appreciated it. So she rented it to him for a year, and when she decided on New York, she agreed to sell it to him. If this is a prolonged story about a house being gradually altered for forty years waiting for its fated resident—he had arrived.

The man was Ferdinando Scarfiotti, a production designer in theater and film, not always credited as thoroughly as he deserves, but one of those artists who has contributed substantially to the tone of modern moviemaking without being director, actor, or writer. He is Italian, and he had his training with Luchino Visconti—arguably the movie director most obsessed by and demanding about decor—and with Bernardo Bertolucci. Brooke was in a mood that couldn't understand anyone wanting to live in L.A., but Nando was a newcomer, excited to be more than just a visitor—he had had a house for several years in Bolinas. It was not easy for him to work in Hollywood because he was not a member of the union. But some directors in America regarded him as a nearly mythic figure, not just a man with his own elegance and humor but the designer of *Death in Venice, The Conformist,* and *Last Tango in Paris.*

Many of Scarfiotti's films use real locations; the filmmakers go to Paris and New Orleans, and they seek out actual hotels or apartments suited to the characters. But the great designers know that it is never enough for filmed places to be real. They must become worthy of the story, part of the dream's texture. You may need to paint the grass or color-enchance the sky in the labs to get what you want. So in *Cat People,* Nando used the actual New Orleans zoo for the basis of his setting but remade the zoo itself on the Universal lot—a psychic ordeal of iron cages, out of the question today as a proper place for animals but true to the dread felt by the characters in *Cat People.*

Nando Scarfiotti usually works for directors who have a developed sense of design. But directors have a lot to do and need people they can trust. Nothing inspires that better than the director's certainty that the designer understands the film. It is one thing to

dress a set and quite another to know the drama, psychology, and mood that must determine color, space, and structure. Think of that nearly empty apartment in *Last Tango* where Brando encounters Maria Schneider, and recollect the hue of flesh. Think of the Fascist-style offices, the railway carriage, the dance hall café, and the hotel rooms in *The Conformist*. Think of the gloomy car where Jean Louis Trintignant tries to hide, as the terrified and accusing Dominique Sanda beats at the window. You can find the entire idea of *The Conformist* in such desperate images. They belong to Bertolucci and to the actors, but they belong to Scarfiotti, too.

Nando was in Los Angeles in 1978 for his greatest test. Paul Schrader (an intense admirer of the Bertolucci films) had written a script called *American Gigolo* about a man whose life is polarized between a very sordid career and immaculate taste: a gigolo in Armani clothes.

"Don't go for cliché," Scarfiotti remembers Schrader telling him. "So I did my version of the city. It would be more difficult now, I think. Now I know the grim reality of L.A. too well. And I would be more in awe of it. On *Gigolo* we did the Polo Lounge, and I just made it pink instead of green. Today I wouldn't *dare* do that."

He adds that almost certainly no studio would risk *American Gigolo* now; there was an adventurousness in the late seventies, not to mention an appetite for sexual danger and social subversion which has vanished in the cautious eighties. But the influence of *Gigolo* was enormous. The movie served to display the new international smartness of L.A.—the art scene, the restaurants, and the exhilaration of fashion. *American Gigolo* was the first Hollywood film that realized L.A. had become a great city of the world. The unexpected box-office success of the movie and its insolent, deadpan pursuit of taste as a kind of moral imperative had a strong influence on film and TV and led to *Miami Vice*. *Vice* has never, however, matched the nerve or astringent passion that Scarfiotti, Schrader, cameraman John Bailey, and composer Giorgio Moroder achieved in *American Gigolo*.

It was the movie that best defined a new cold-camp style as the one state of flawlessness that might transcend depravity and chaos. There is even a moment in the film when Richard Gere writes his phone number on the brow of a stooge tailing him and the number is a palindrome (636-1636). Nothing in the film is without grace or some eerie equilibrium. As one watched it, it was often impossible to decide whether the film was absurd or magnificent. Of course, it was both. And it was that ambivalence that made it such a chilling turning point.

You should not expect to see *Gigolo* all over Nando's house. He is not Julian Kay, only one of his creators. And he is unlike many Hollywood property owners in that he never thought to gut the house again and make it *his*. "I am lazy, you see. I don't know that it really *is* a designer's house. I did a few things—I painted it white outside. Brooke had done it blue. And inside I made most of it white. I like it with practically nothing inside, so when I come home from work in the studio, I can relax my eyes."

This relaxation might not suit everyone. For Nando has made of the house something that is not uncommon in his movies—a kind of contemplative chapel for the intelligent modern man. Brooke's desire for light has been purified by his white walls, white sofas, and the pale blond wood of the floors. In the living room, when I saw it, there was no more color than two aqua vases in recesses in the wall and the merest blush of pink in the white tulips on the glass table. The room is hysterically calm, and the contradiction is typical of the suggestiveness in Scarfiotti's best work.

There is no clutter, no untidiness. Nando admits that every now and then he has to beat back the advance of possessions that threaten this serenity. He throws things out, just as he never keeps designs, models, or pictures from his movies. He abandons them—gives them away or just forgets them. He depends on the films themselves. Upstairs in the bedroom there is one trace of *Gigolo* in the row of suits and

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shirts that hang beyond the bed, not closeted—the perfect thin men.

The art consists of a small Bacon head, a Warhol portrait in oil of Mao, and a black-and-white Paul Jasmin of a male figure. Yet the aura is so close to being perfect that it is more like the house of a character in a fiction than of a real person subject to mess or indecision.

He has had the house now a little more than six years. Time to become rather less enthralled by L.A. Time to realize that he needs to go back to Italy every year where he can walk in Rome, meet people and talk, and do without a car. He has done more work: *Scarface* for Brian De Palma (think of the mock-epic gangster palace and the statuary of cocaine mountains, Michelle Pfeiffer in a blue backless slit gown riding down in a glass elevator); *The Right Stuff,* which he prepared but left just as shooting began because of differences with director Philip Kaufman. He would like to have done *Mishima* for Paul Schrader, and the Philip Glass score resounded throughout the house when I visited, but he was prevented by work on a Bertolucci film that never got made—Dashiell Hammett's *Red Harvest.* And he is just back from a long stay in China, where he has done *The Last Emperor* for Bertolucci. He is at last in the union, so now he could qualify for an Oscar. For years he had to be billed as visual consultant, a credit not recognized by the Academy.

No matter how white or austere, the small house fascinates: the water in the pool flashes, the roses and the jacaranda tree outshine the lights of the city below, and the wounded caramel grain of the sunsets—the view Nando finds just a little "aggressive." He shudders at it; it does almost beg you to be master of all you see.

It is not easy, immediately, to perceive how the house is a model for smart L.A. Nando doesn't do houses for other people. He couldn't work for owners without ideas, but he would be shy of telling real people what to do with their home. He doesn't quite "do" even his own house. He has always felt daunted by all the fleshy marble and reflectiveness in Brooke's bathroom. It amuses him to leave it. He does regard his own house, I think, as something like a way station. It is the idea of a setting, a set, or the chapel again. With Nando as its character, the house has become a mysterious monument that almost requires emptiness so that the camera can study it.

But Scarfiotti's films have had their own influence: there are interiors all over L.A. that are affected by his movies. And now that the house is shown here, it may serve as the ultimate select hideaway. For L.A. is a city in which no building, no space, has more power than that of the false front, the photograph of space, the idea of grace, a place heard of but not entered. □

WELSH COMFORT

(Continued from page 119) l'oeil paint finishes throughout the house, carried out with the confidence of virtuosity in a few days. The considerable amount of new woodwork at Cruglas was undertaken by Michael Lally, brought across from Ireland, where Lady Lisburne had been impressed by the work he had done for fashion and textile designer Sybil Connolly.

The compact appearance of the house nestling against the hillside belies the true extent of its interior, although none of its rooms is enormous and some could realistically be described as tiny. The drawing room at Cruglas, generous but with ceilings under nine feet, is predominated by warm celandine yellows, and the tone is set by Jim Smart's subtle but characterful trompe l'oeil paneling.

The clear distinction between clutter and plenitude is the distinguishing trait of Lady Lisburne's decor. She hates clutter, even berating her Welsh compatriots for their untidy habits, like leaving empty plastic fertilizer sacks in neighboring fields. And yet nobody would dream of using any word related to severity to describe this drawing room, and there is no trace of British masochism lurking in the upholstery, which is of the sybaritic sort you can lie back and almost bury yourself in. "Comfort is *the* thing," she says unequivocally.

If the house had a ghost, it might be that of the chill spirit of the Welsh slate slabs that formerly made up the dining-room floor. Any hard-line conservationist who winces to learn that this original floor was removed (with great expenditure of energy, it took five men to lift out one single slab) should be forced to live with it, like the Cruglas farmer's wife who is alleged to have said, nearing the hour of her death, "That floor killed me." The original floor has been replaced by warm honey-colored prefabricated stone slabs, interposed with diamonds of slate. The pale apricot walls, the new chimneypiece carved by Michael Lally, the caning of the walnut dining chairs, and such heirlooms as the nineteenth-century gold plates made for the family by Lady Amhurst (unusual for the time a lady goldsmith) all combine to give the room a mellow welcoming mood.

Thence out into the garden, where you will be followed about quietly but inquisitively by Sir Herbert. The runt end of a litter of Jack Russells, he is now obviously the darling of the house. Against all odds, Lady Lisburne has done wonders with the terraced garden. Winters at Cruglas can be fierce, and a great deal of experimentation has been necessary to establish varieties that can stand up to the conditions.

Lady Lisburne modestly states she only decorates for friends. But her friends are legion, on both sides of the Atlantic. "They say I do bedrooms best," she adds, an estimation borne out by the bedrooms at Cruglas. It is no wonder the three guest bedrooms, each decorated differently, are particularly favored by friends who are writers. Each has a desk by the window, a view across Cors Tregaron, and access to the intimacy of the house's secret garden.

"Get the house right first," Lady Lisburne advises, "and if there is any money left over, decorate!" At Cruglas she has "got the house right" to the extent she and Lord Lisburne made the decision this year to sell their London home and spend as much time as possible here at the roots of their family tree. □

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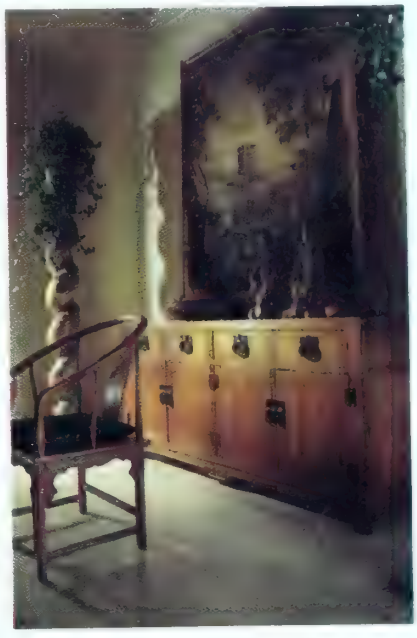
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Volume 159, Number 9

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COVER
In decorator Richard Lowell Neas's bedroom, the only English-style room in his French-style house, 18th-century Staffordshire animals stand on an English chest. Story page 134. Photograph by Jacques Dirand.

House & Garden (ISSN 0018-6406) is published monthly by The Condé Nast Publications Inc., 9100 Wilshire Boulevard, Beverly Hills CA 90212. PRINCIPAL OFFICE: 350 Madison Avenue, New York NY 10017. Bernard H. Leser, President; Eric C. Anderson, Vice President-Treasurer; Pamela van Zandt, Vice President-Secretary. Second-class postage paid at Beverly Hills CA and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions, in U.S. and possessions, $24 for one year, $46 for two years; in Canada, $38 for one year, $74 for two years. Elsewhere, $41 for one year, payable in advance. Single copies: U.S. $4, Canada $4.50. For subscriptions, address changes, and adjustments, write to House & Garden, Box 5202, Boulder CO 80322. Eight weeks are required for change of address. Please give both new address and old as printed on last label. First copy of a new subscription will be mailed within eight weeks after receipt of order. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, and for payment of postage in cash. For further information about anything appearing in this issue, please write to House & Garden Reader Information, Condé Nast Building, 350 Madison Ave., New York NY 10017. Manuscripts, drawings, and other material submitted must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. However, House & Garden cannot be responsible for unsolicited material. Copyright © 1987 by The Condé Nast Publications Inc. All rights reserved.
Postmaster: **Send address changes to House & Garden, Box 5202, Boulder CO 80322. SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES: Please write to House & Garden, Box 5202, Boulder CO 80322**
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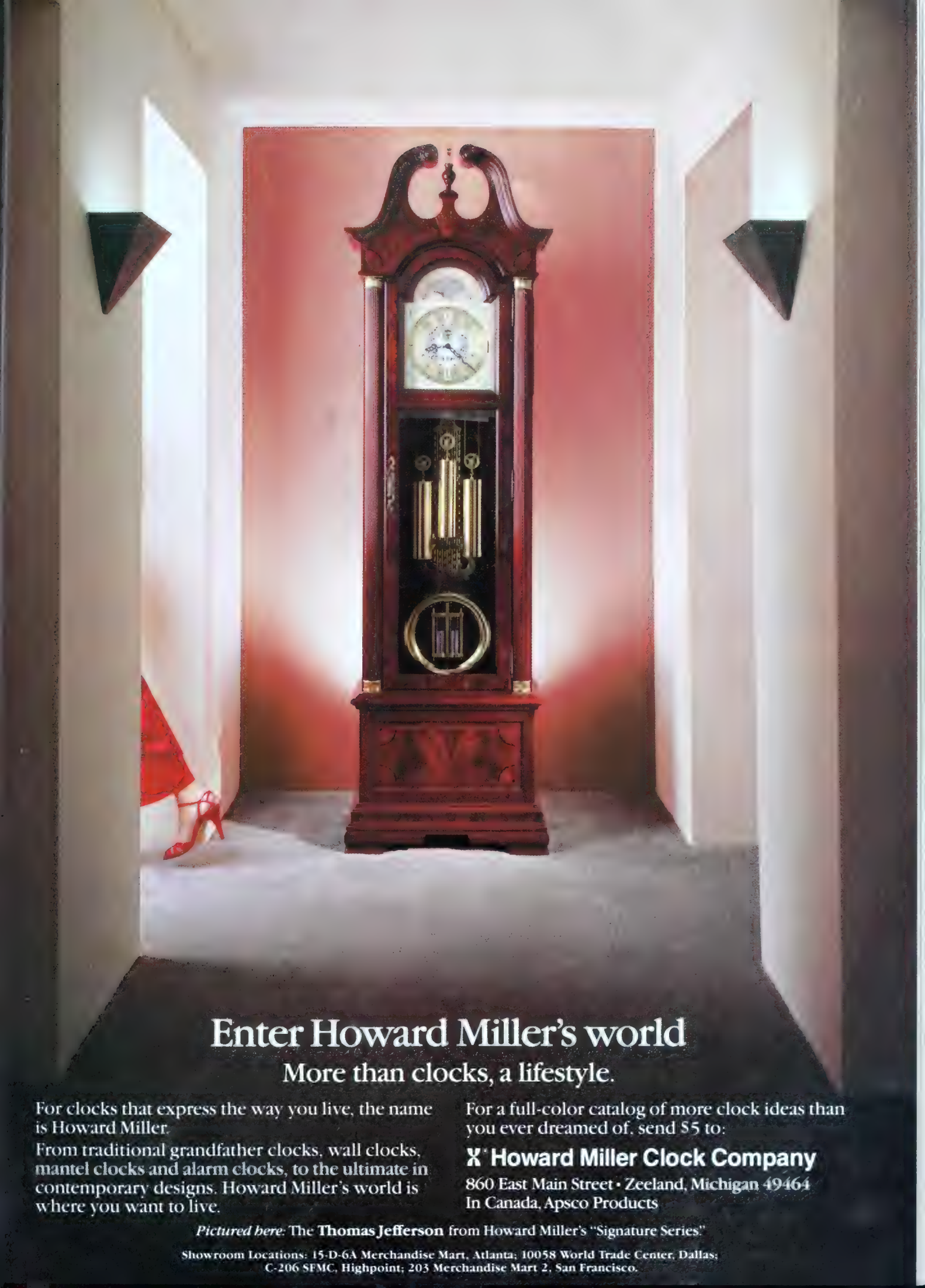

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AUSTRALIAN VOGUE LIVING 49 Clarence St., Sydney, N.S.W. 2000

HOUSE & GARDEN is published by The Condé Nast Publications Inc.
Condé Nast Building, 350 Madison Ave., New York NY 10017
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As Brendan Gill writes in our opening story, a "mingling of traditions often produces consequences as agreeable as they are astonishing." Mr. Gill's reflections were in response to our request that he write on the Georgia house of William Nathaniel Banks, page 112, but they are equally apt as we take a look at the many moods of American decorating in this issue. The Banks house provides one of the best examples we have seen of rooms furnished with pieces from the Federal and Empire periods. "Whenever somebody hints that the house strikes him as sparsely furnished, I take that as a compliment," Bill Banks says. He should. As a matter of fact, we are paying Mr. Banks another form of compliment: next month we will be publishing another of his houses, this one in New England.

Where the Banks house is spare, the house of interior designer Richard Lowell Neas, page 134, is bursting with decorative images, not surprising to those who are acquainted with the work of this masterful decorative painter. Mr. Neas decided to capture the spirit of the French countryside in his Long Island house, where his "fabulous fakery" is a delight to the eye in room after room of trompe l'oeil effects on window frames, doors, and walls.

On the opposite shore of the United States, and as different from either the Banks house or the Neas house as it could be, is the Wilsey house in San Francisco, page 124. A collaboration between the late Michael Taylor and Dede Wilsey, the house is a striking blend of Michael Taylor's sense of scale and Dede Wilsey's partiality to color. We had dinner there during last year's San Francisco Antiques Show and experienced the glory of the new garden room in which a giant skylight literally opens the house to the stars overhead. We also felt pretty special when we went in to dinner and the Flora Danica porcelain, which is usually exhibited in an eighteenth-century chinoiserie cabinet in the dining room, was on the tables where dinner was served for 24.

Showing the same inclination to exuberant color, but again very different in style, is the house Rosemary Gilman decorated for Marifé Hernández, who served as President Jimmy Carter's chief of protocol. The Gilman-Hernández collaboration was on a house in the Hamptons, page 180, and the rooms reflect Rosemary Gilman's interest in pattern design, not surprising since that was her profession before she began decorating.

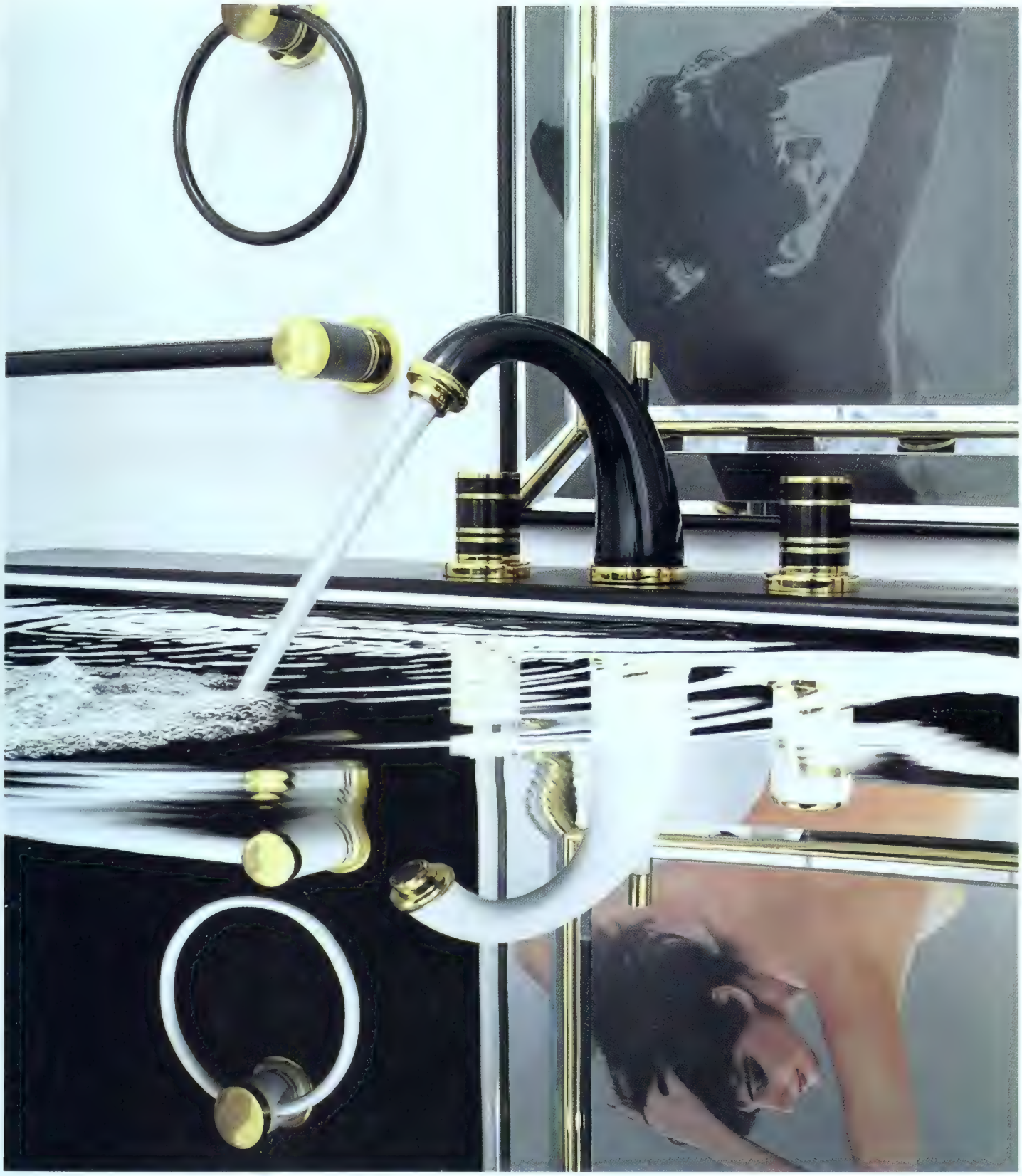


Senior decorating editor Jacqueline Gonnet and Bill Banks taking a break during the photography of his house in Coweta County, Georgia.

American decorating has always been influenced by other cultures and other countries, and a notable example is the work of Laura Ashley, whose decorating predilections are seen in the Brussels house, page 158, she shared with her husband and partner, Sir Bernard Ashley, until her death. Laura Ashley designs have influenced rooms across America since their fabric and fashion business was born in 1953 with the screen-printing of Victorian-style tea towels on the kitchen table of the Ashleys' apartment in London. Which just goes to show, one never knows where or when a new trend in decorating is about to emerge.

Lou Gropp

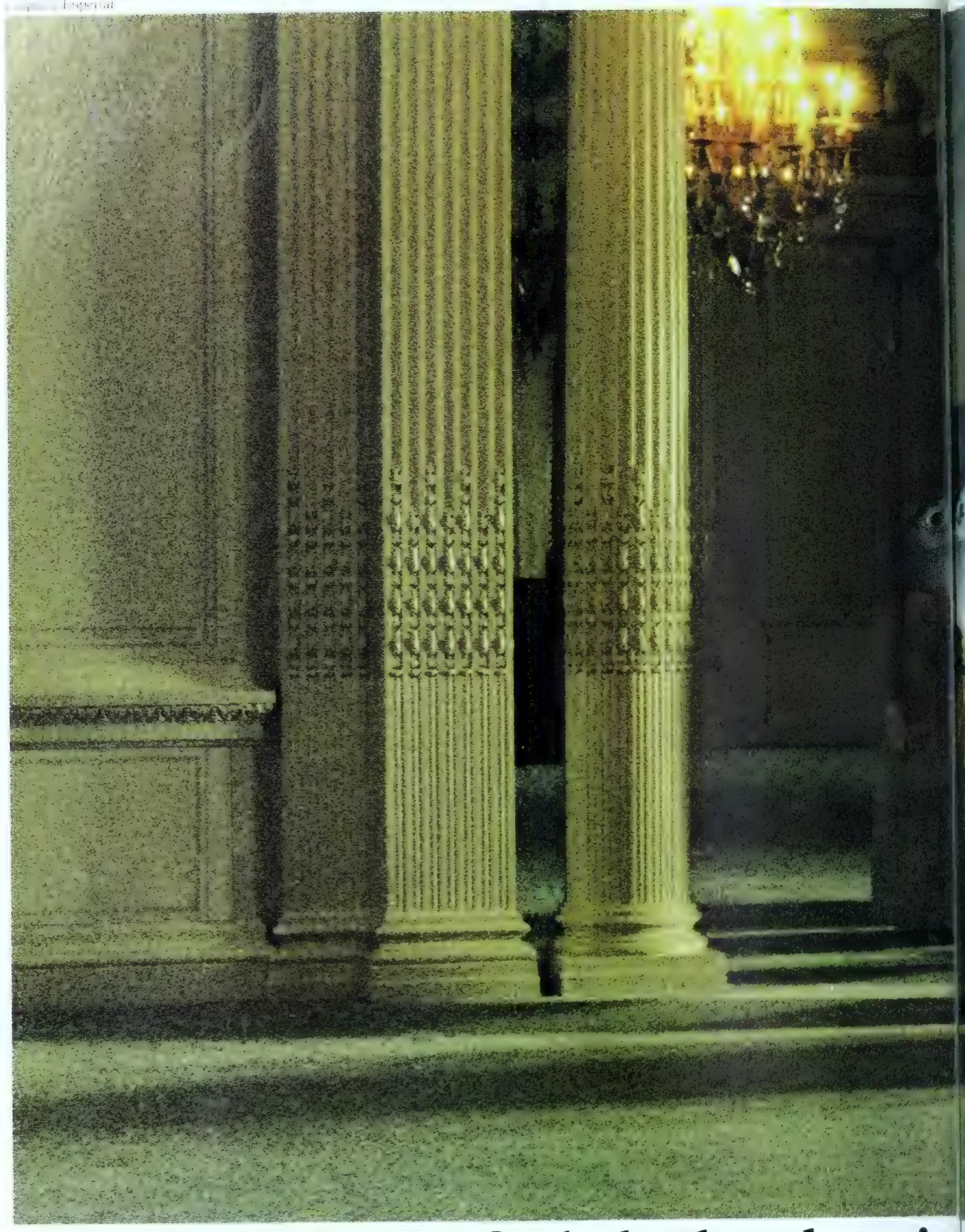
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Superbly refurbished by architect Charles Pfister, this fabled American institution now has a setting equal to its transformed menu

By Martin Filler

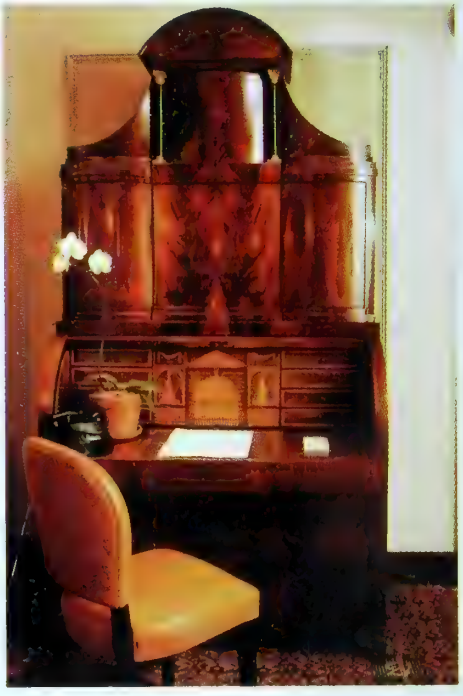
It pays not to mess around with a legend, as the hapless remodelers of too many landmark restaurants have found out. That is doubly true in New York, a city beset by such constant change that its restaurants are sometimes prized more for their enduring ambience than for their food. The barbarous transmogrification of the Plaza Hotel's venerable Edwardian Room into the ghastly Green Tulip in 1971 was such a disaster that the dining room was soon restored to its original state. In 1982 the hundred-year-old Lüchow's, gemütlich survivor of the Gilded Age, was uprooted from its faded splendor on East 14th Street and transplanted to the scarcely less-seedy Broadway theater district, never to be heard of since. And now that the Algonquin Hotel has been sold to a Japanese corporation, fear has swept its devoted public that the home of the Round Table might befall an alien fate.

Wary of making such mistakes, Marshall S. Cogan, the new owner of the "21" Club—perhaps the most renowned of all New York restaurants—was well aware that he had purchased not so much a business as an American institution. To tamper with the formidable mystique of "21," he shrewdly understood, would be to defeat the very justification he felt in paying a reported $21 million for the trio of interconnecting brownstones at 21, 19, and 17 West 52nd Street and investing another $8 million or so in its revitalization. By the time Cogan acquired it in 1985, "21" was in a steep decline. Coasting on the loyalty of its aging clientele, the 65-year-old former speakeasy did virtually nothing to attract a new generation. Although its prices were as high as any in town, the food was horrendous, the setting drab, and, unless one was familiar to the management, the welcome ranged from cavalier indifference to arctic chill.

Knowing nothing about the restaurant business but seeing the potential for a dramatic transformation, Cogan









KAREN RADKAI

Left: The Puncheon Room, scene of the new "21" Breakfast Club, has chair backs slipcovered in Roger Arlington's Plissé. At lower right is James Montgomery Flagg's painting of "21" in the thirties. *Above:* Next to the front door, a late-18th-century Danish mahogany secretary. *Top center:* The virtually unchanged bar. *Center:* English sporting pictures, flowers by Robert Isabell.


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—who is chairman of Knoll International Holdings, Inc., owner of the prestigious office furniture manufacturer—assembled a topflight team of professionals to carry out his plan for restoring "21" to a new level of excellence. A fan of the innovative New American cooking at Arcadia, a small East Side restaurant so popular one must book a dinner reservation several weeks in advance, Cogan hired Arcadia's manager, Ken Aretsky, and its chef, Anne Rosenzweig, the most talked-about woman on the American food scene since Alice Waters. They were entrusted with revamping the "21" menu, adding new dishes in the Arcadia manner for a younger, more sophisticated audience.

Yet the die-hard "21" coterie had to be retained and catered to as well, for in the intensely competitive New York luxury restaurant market every repeat customer is a valued asset. Thus Rosenzweig was also asked to improve its classic favorites, among them Chicken Hash, Sunset Salad, and the famed "21" Burger. To execute the new preparations, Alain Sailhac, the master French chef who had made Le Cirque one of New York's most predictably sublime dining experiences, was lured from an early retirement. With a crew like that there was little likelihood of anything less than a resounding culinary success, and with the exception of a few misses noted here and there, reviewers' reactions to the new food at "21" have been largely enthusiastic.

An equally delicate task was how to deal with the interior design of "21," which, like its food, had been allowed to deteriorate terribly. "In all the years we were here," former owner "Mr. Pete" Kriendler recently bragged with scant exaggeration, "we put about 32 cents in the place." It showed. With the exception of the restaurant's noteworthy collection of Frederic Remington paintings and bronzes (first bought at bargain basement prices in the twenties), it looked like a highflown frat house and not a very tidy one at that. Still, like the old food, the interiors had powerful associations that could not be ignored in the revival scheme, and the design equivalent of the new food strategy was called for.

Marshall Cogan turned to Charles Pfister, a San Francisco architect specializing in interiors and designer of one of Knoll's best pieces of the seventies, the Pfister table. Former head of the interior design group at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill's San Francisco branch, Pfister is known for his sleek, frankly Modernist corporate offices. His excellent International Style interior for the acclaimed Square One restaurant in San Francisco in 1984 showed he had a full command of restaurant design, but because "21" was more a redecoration than a wholly new scheme, Pfister seemed at first an unlikely choice. However, he turned out to be ideal, for he had not only the technical and managerial know-how for such a complex project but also a faultless instinct for what should be played up and what should be toned down. Pfister's redesign of "21" is clubby without being stuffy, fresh without being trendy, and glamorous without being showy. It strikes all the right notes, but does it so quietly that discretion is its most obvious attribute.

On the outside "21" looks just as it always has, except that it now gleams with the attention to detail that had been lacking before. The cast-iron jockeys painted with the racing colors of "21" regulars still climb the unused stairway parallel to the façade, but the entrance vestibule now radiates cheerful elegance rather than subdued neglect. Inside the front door, one is still met by one of the familiar "21" greeters (much of the top-level staff has been retained from the previous ownership), but changes are immediately visible. Most striking is a life-size nineteenth-century English wooden horse, draped with a Pfister-designed navy-and-crimson blanket inscribed "21," from M. J. Knoud, the Madison Avenue saddlery. This whimsy, a favorite of Marshall Cogan's, has drawn a fair amount of criticism from the old guard, but it is far more stylish than the odd shrine, since banished, that once stood nearby: Buffalo Bill's solid silver saddle, encased in a plastic vitrine, atop which stood a TV tuned to a stock-quotation channel.

Less controversial is the exceptionally handsome Neoclassical Danish mahogany secretary that stands invitingly to the right of the front door as one enters, a distinguished emblem of the taste of the new "21." Next to the reception area is the parlor, nicely redone with comfortable sofas and wing



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chairs upholstered in pale apricot leather, a color which seems a bit too suburban but which no doubt will eventually wear into a more subtle tone. The only other questionable choice is the use of the "21" Iron Gate logo woven into the wall-to-wall carpeting, which strikes an undesirably commercial chord. As Sister Parish dryly observed during a recent dinner there, "After all, we already know where we are."

By far the most closely watched space at "21" has been the ground-floor barroom. To many devotees, the barroom is a primordial preserve, as inviolable as the Chicken Hash. It is easy to see why. The low-beamed ceiling is densely hung with dozens of totemic symbols of financial might: miniature jets given by CEOs of airlines, football helmets presented by team owners, tiny trailer trucks from captains of the shipping industry. It's quite a history, and at a time when many restaurants are trying to fake one, it would have been foolish to efface the real thing.



A corner of the second floor dining room

Let "21" be "21" was the operative concept, and it has worked spendidly.

That philosophy, as well as Pfister's liberal latitude in working within it, is best demonstrated by the main dining room on the second floor, which now ranks among the most attractive restaurant interiors in New York. Seen without people, it looks deceptively ordinary. The original wood paneling, not of the highest quality, has been repainted with a handsome grain, and the "21" collection of Georgian and Victorian silver has been reinstalled to greater advantage. Chair backs are now loosely slipcovered in a trompe l'oeil pleated print, and corners of the room are brightened by large but unobtrusive flower arrangements, simple seasonal staples rather than the typically aggressive New York ikebana of anthurium, bird-of-paradise, protea, and curly willow.

Less apparent but even more essential to the success of the dining room's redesign are the excellent acoustical control and superb lighting. For the most part, dining out in Manhattan has become in recent years a form of aural torture, with decibel levels approaching the pain threshold at many establishments. The new New York restaurants make it by and large impossible to enjoy a conversation along with one's meal. Ever since its reopening in May, the dining room at "21" has been packed, but Pfister's knowledgeable moves, such as padding the wallcovering (Knoll's Cocoon raw silk) and redoing the ceiling with acoustic panels that don't look institutional, make it a pleasure to spend several hours in. So does the level of lighting. It is bright enough for one to see who's just walked in and to appreciate Rosenzweig and Sailhac's artful presentations, but soft enough to be cosmetically flattering, without that phony peachy glow that makes customers in some restaurants look as if they are being kept warm by infrared heaters.

The well-heeled people who come to "21" are not in search of manufactured atmosphere, and Pfister's thoughtful decisions parallel the formula followed by the most durable designers of high-ticket clothing for that very audience. They understand the way of life led by their customers, what they need, and therefore what they want. The men and women who do not require novelty and sensation but look for quality, consistency, and the assurance of the tried-and-true will gravitate to the new "21"—a comeback that could convince even the most cynical of New Yorkers that despite the ravages of time this is still a Helluva Town. □

Editor: Babs Simpson





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SETTING THE TABLE

This daily ritual can liberate a multitude of design possibilities

By Mark Hampton

"Go set the table." Or to be more polite, "Would you please help set the table?" The times I've heard this from the moment I could be trusted with breakable treasures! Do children still have to help set the table? I hope so. The endlessly repeated routine results in a habit that is essential to being able to create the inviting personal arrangements that are central to attractive meals, and as we all know, everything happens at the dinner table.

The subject of table settings is broad and multifaceted. It embodies two opposite and very lively realms. The first is that of traditionalism; the second is that of fashion and change—two areas of concern that can be antithetical to many people. But the combination of these opposing themes—old-fashioned on the one hand and up-to-date on the other—is what leads to the delightful tables that make some households memorable and that finally confer laurel crowns on those really legendary hostesses (and hosts).

Without sounding too partial to the illustrious history of the magazines of the Condé Nast company, I must say that while growing up, I was continually entertained by their frequent articles about various personalities and their tables for lunch and dinner, breakfast and tea, as well as every other conceivable repast. There was Valentina's round table with its centerpiece a monumental 1860s Baccarat candelabra that looked like something from *La Traviata*. Massed around its base were scarlet and burgundy carnations (everyone hates carnations now, but they looked awfully good then) combined with cherries, lemons, and limes on an embroidered white cloth with hammered-copper service plates on which sat blue-and-white Chinese rice bowls for soup with matching porcelain spoons at each place. The silver was large-scale and simple, as was the crystal. More disparate elements could not be imagined. The result was beautiful.



Starring a crystal pagoda, a 1940s table by the legendary Elsie Woodward

Then there was Harvey Ladew, the Baltimore patrician whose house and garden were, and still are, famous for their style. He served breakfast to his guests on trays bearing porcelain decorated with hunting motifs, a silver bell made in the shape of a fox's head, and silver flatware with rough horn handles. When she wasn't thinking about her newest bangle from Cartier, the Duchess of Windsor, another Baltimorean, dreamed up silver with real bamboo handles—or copied it as soon as she saw it. The table at the Windsors' mill outside Paris photographed in the early fifties was full of charming ideas that are just as appealing today: in addition to the bamboo-handle sil-

MARK HAMPTON



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verware, there were painted faience plates, overscaled crystal, and a basket in the center shaped like a cornucopia and filled with primroses.

My favorite magazine table setting was the long Georgian pedestal table of the legendary Elsie Woodward with its vast collection of eighteenth-century Waterford glass. The centerpiece of this divine table was a crystal temple with a pagoda-shaped roof and a mirrored base. It was this lovely object, rare and glamorous, that prevented the table from looking stuffy and conventional. Furthermore, and here is where the contemporary fashion element comes in, the place mats were made of plastic decorated with gold Art Moderne scrolls. Heaven knows I hate plastic anything, and plastic place mats sound awful today. But who cares! In the forties they must have been diverting. That table has to have been gorgeous.

Starting with the first thing to be put on the table, linens are an easy and beautiful way to change your look, especially if you do not have many sets of dishes to play around with. (Also if you have someone who can do a lovely job of ironing.) In the past fifteen or twenty years there has been a revolution in the design of table linens, especially attractive and interesting napkins that can be used with plain mats or tablecloths. There are informal batiks and ginghams and plaids and an equally large range of more formal types with appliqué or embroidery. Old ones are nicer to the touch because they have become pleasantly soft with years of laundering. Napkins with synthetic fibers feel stiff and awful. The experience we all anticipate when we sit down to eat is not one that admits thoughts of polyester.

Place mats can be just as beautiful as tablecloths, and if your table has a wonderful top, the mats can be just large enough for the dinner plate to sit on. Round tables do not look very good with oblong place mats overlapping or bumping into one another at odd angles. Years ago I saw a marvelous table set with old cross-stitched place mats and napkins, antique pink lusterware plates, and amethyst glass. Down the center of the table were tiny bunches of pink and lavender flowers also in amethyst glass. It was charming and American and informal but still very chic. It was also wonderfully personal in the way it showed a collection in use instead of on display.

If you have the space to store it, glassware and porcelain can be collected throughout your life and will enable you to satisfy both the need to collect and the desire to have variety in your table settings. A range of ingredients can enable you to experiment with all kinds of different looks: napkins folded in fanciful ways, plates and soup bowls mixed in unexpected combinations, and the general realm of glass and crystal clustered together one way one time, another way another time. How many people do we know whose tables always look the same? Obviously collecting different patterns of silverware is beyond the reach of most of us, but if you can afford it, that's certainly fun.

The various accessories that can be put on the table don't necessarily have to match. There are a great many objects that can give a table an invitingly cluttered look if that's what you like. Saltcellars, pepper shakers or pepper mills, mustard pots, antique boxes for toothpicks or artificial sweeteners, little pitchers and sauceboats, jam pots—these old-fashioned minutiae can lend a generous atmosphere to a table which conveys a sense of anticipating the guests' individual needs. Times do change, of course, and we live in a time when smoking at the table is suddenly scorned. Eighty years ago, no one would have dreamed of smoking at the table, and if a hostess today wants to return to that point of view, why make a fuss? If there are any smoking accessories on the table, then one may smoke. If they are absent, one should take the hint.

The centerpiece of this article should probably be the centerpiece of the table. It should be the best part, except for the food, of course, or the conversation. Here's where the cheerful homemaker can really make a difference. New ideas are always welcome. Ages ago Bernard Boutet de Monvel, the great portrait painter, combined real vegetables with a collection of old faience ones to create a wonderful arrangement that could be copied today. Old tureens and their smaller matching covered dishes clustered in the middle of the table can be lovely and sufficiently low to make the view across the table unobstructed. The modern practice of numerous tiny vases filled with a variety of small flowers can be pretty, fairly easy, and quick. (You have to have a florist who has something other than 'American Beauty' roses and daisies, though.) Antique glass and porcelain dishes piled with fruit look lovely and do not run the risks that arranging flowers in water always poses. Flower arranging, the most time-honored method of creating a centerpiece, is always best, I think, where some personal touch has been developed. The most personal touch of all is to have grown the flowers oneself. Is there anything more enchanting than a bunch of homegrown roses glowing in the candlelight? Even if you have to rely on your florist, you can learn to take at least a little control of the situation. Most bought centerpieces are too tall and stiff, but all they need is a stern hand and a little self-confidence.

Finally, if it's dinnertime, the possibilities that candles provide is enormous. Antique candlesticks of all sorts can be mixed with silver in a carefree way as long as they look pretty. Low candles, tall candles, votive candles—they are all beautiful. Color is important. I love cream-colored and ivory-colored candles, and white ones naturally. I also love black candles, which look marvelous but which some people find creepy. What I don't like are colored candles, unless it's Christmastime. And certainly candles, like flowers, should not have a scent that competes with the food.

The most gratifying aspect of collecting all the various things that are required for setting the table is the way in which one can mix purchases and presents and inherited bits and pieces from the eras of one's life in such a way that the table, when all dressed up for dinner, looks beautiful, inviting, and personal. After 23 years of picking up some soup bowls here and some dessert plates there, my wife and I still use many of the things we started out with: strict early Georgian–style silver with heavy pistol-handle knives, which looks older than it is because we use it every day; plates decorated with fruit



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and flowers, which are preceded by red-and-gold Wedgwood service plates that belonged to my wife's grandmother and which are now often combined with a collection of nineteenth-century ruby glass tumblers and vases that have increased in number with the passing years. (I should mention that the walls of the dining room are glazed in two reds.)

Our candlesticks are either glass or silver, depending on the number required, and the small objects such as saltcellars and ashtrays match the candle holders. If you have vermeil candlesticks, I don't mean to say you have to use them with vermeil knives and forks; too much matching looks store-bought. The wine coasters we use are either red lacquer, emphasizing the red motif, or silver. Sometimes we put the wine into old decanters; other times we leave it in the bottle.

As we get older, we seem to grow fonder of heavily embroidered tablecloths. Our napkins don't change much: they are all big white linen damask and from another era. Every year a few more of them go to shreds, but that's no real problem since they were always made in such huge sets.

The flowers in the center are arranged in any number of interesting vases in a variety of sizes. Some of them are red antique glass; others are old Baccarat or Waterford glass or pressed glass from the nineteenth century. Their intrinsic value is beside the point. What makes them desirable is their capacity to hold flowers in an easy and attractive way. It seems best to choose flowers that are not excessively fragrant—we avoid narcissus and lilies—but not many flowers can dominate the aroma of hot food.

The dessert things we use are sometimes pink with flowers in the center or old green Wedgwood majolica that can double for fruit if that's what gets served at the end of the meal. The real point is that there are no restrictions on what you can collect and combine just as long as you are fairly sure of what you like. It is the ability to change from one day to the next that enlivens table setting. Playing around with all the alternatives is what makes it fun. Maybe we shouldn't ask the kids to set the table after all. Grownup creativity is more reliable than a child's improvisations. □





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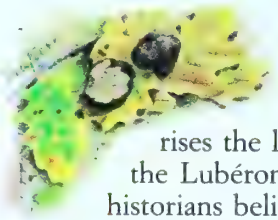
LES VENDANGES—Chintz

OF TRUFFLES AND LAVENDER

Delicious gleanings from the hills of Provence

By Leslie Forbes





North of Aix-en-Provence rises the long, blue mass of the Lubéron mountain. Some historians believe that the name comes from the Provençal word for rabbit, supposedly referring to the mountain's shape. It would need a good stretch of the imagination to see any resemblance, but the Lubéron people have certainly roasted a lot of *lapin* in their time, so perhaps the name is not unjustified.

The Lubéron foothills, the Petit Lubéron, are topped with a series of stone villages, originally built to offer refuge from Saracen marauders in the ninth century. They continued to provide protection from later marauders throughout the Middle Ages and well into the nineteenth century, when marauding became, if not less fashionable, at least less violent. Many of the villages were then abandoned to become the ruins that today suggest etchings from a Sir Walter Scott romance. Their former occupants moved to the fertile fruit- and vegetable-rich valleys below to create what is now the great market garden of France. More recent marauders in Provence—artists, writers, and musicians who can afford to ignore agricultural inconveniences for the sake of a view—have begun to restore the old villages to a semblance of their past glory.

The villagers of the Lubéron may have left their hilltops to others, but they still cling tenaciously to their old traditions. One of the most cherished is *la chasse*—hunting—and of all the game chased, the black truffle is one of the most revered.

Abel Rivarel is a truffle admirer and hunter, supplying his friend the restaurateur Gabriel Rousselet with enough of the precious fungus to satisfy his

LESLIE FORBES



Never trust a man who lavishes expensive gifts upon you," y Mother always said. "Unless you really like him."

She told me a lot of things about en, my Mother. And she was almost ways right.

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By the time they served lunch I as halfway to falling in love.

Over the next two weeks I saw him st about every day. So when he asked e to join him for a trip out of town, it asn't really a surprise.

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Rousselet bakes the costly "black pearls" in puff pastry with only the marginally less princely wild cepes as seasoning

customers at Les Bories in Gordes. Last winter was a bad year for truffles—good for tourists but too hot and dry for mushrooms—and Abel was having little success: 100 grams here, 200 grams there. Not like the winter of 1959, when he found eight kilos in one day. Nor even 1978, the last great truffle year, when it rained for five months almost without stopping. That year the season lasted three months past its usual February peak. And every day, including Christmas, Abel walked the 5,000 hectares of mountain that is considered his own personal truffle estate by the local people. It makes a lot of legwork these days for a man in his sixties, but for Abel work is a pleasure even in the bad years. He went to the seaside once: "It was like anchovies in a tin—head to tail, head to tail." He prefers his own wild hills where the juniper, savory, thyme, and rosemary grow so thickly on the ground that he and his dog Rita come home smelling of them.



Abel has walked over his country bush by bush, stone by stone, as his father and grandfather did before him, carrying in his memory a mysterious map of truffle hiding places. "Under that tree in 1959 I took two kilos. This tree was good two years ago but no more—maybe in another three it will be good again." The secret is to find the telltale circle of barren ground that slowly develops around any tree whose roots may now or in the future nurture truffles. Then Rita's tail begins to wag, while Abel points out likely patches to her. But hardly has she begun to rootle with nose and paws than he stops her. "Doucement! How many times must I tell you to dig gently?" He finishes the digging with his hand, and as the last clod of earth is freed from a golf ball–size truffle, its potent fleshy scent is released, strong enough even for noncanine noses to appreciate.

The village of Gordes, perched dramatically on a steep hillside and crowned by a Renaissance château, is well known for a group of mysterious beehive-shaped stone huts two miles south of the town. Some of these *bories* are thought to date from pre-Roman times and some from as recently as the eighteenth century. For the past 25 years a group of these on the hill above Gordes have housed Gabriel Rousselet's Les Bories, one of the best restaurants in the Luberon. At nearly seventy, Rousselet still rises early to do his own shopping in the market at Cavaillon. And his clever combination of regional specialties into both new and traditional recipes is admired by everyone. Even Abel Rivarel, the truffle hunter, would prefer "to eat like a king once a month at Gabriel's" than to pay less for something more ordinary.

Gabriel Rousselet remembers with nostalgia the days when Gordes still celebrated its October fete day by leading a steer through the streets. Its fate? To become *une bonne daube de boeuf* for the whole village, served with a village-size *tian de courge,* or pumpkin gratin, baked in the wood-burning oven of the local boulangerie. This tradition has disappeared, but an older one remains—the stalking and eating of truffles by local enthusiasts. Gabriel Rousselet bakes the costly "black pearls" in puff pastry with only the marginally less princely wild cepes as seasoning.

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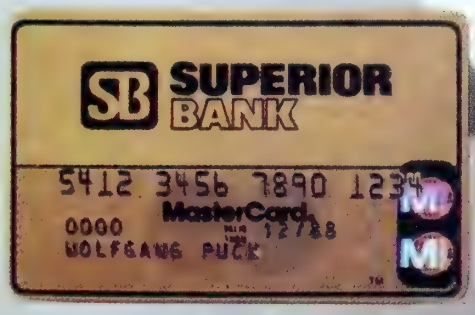
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if necessary), finely chopped
Salt and pepper
1–2 tablespoons warm water
½ ounce unsalted butter
2–3 ounces puff pastry
1 egg beaten

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Use an earthenware dish just big enough to hold the mushrooms, water, and butter without overflowing. Put the truffle in the middle and surround with the other mushrooms. Season, sprinkle with water, and dot with butter. Roll out the puff pastry to ⅛ inch thickness, spread over dish, and seal the edges. Brush with beaten egg and bake for 20–25 minutes until golden. Serve immediately. Serves 1–2 as an appetizer.

To the northeast of Gordes, fields of the world-renowned Provençal lavender stretch like purple corduroy across the hills. From the flowers Gabriel Rousselet makes this strange and fragrant ice cream.

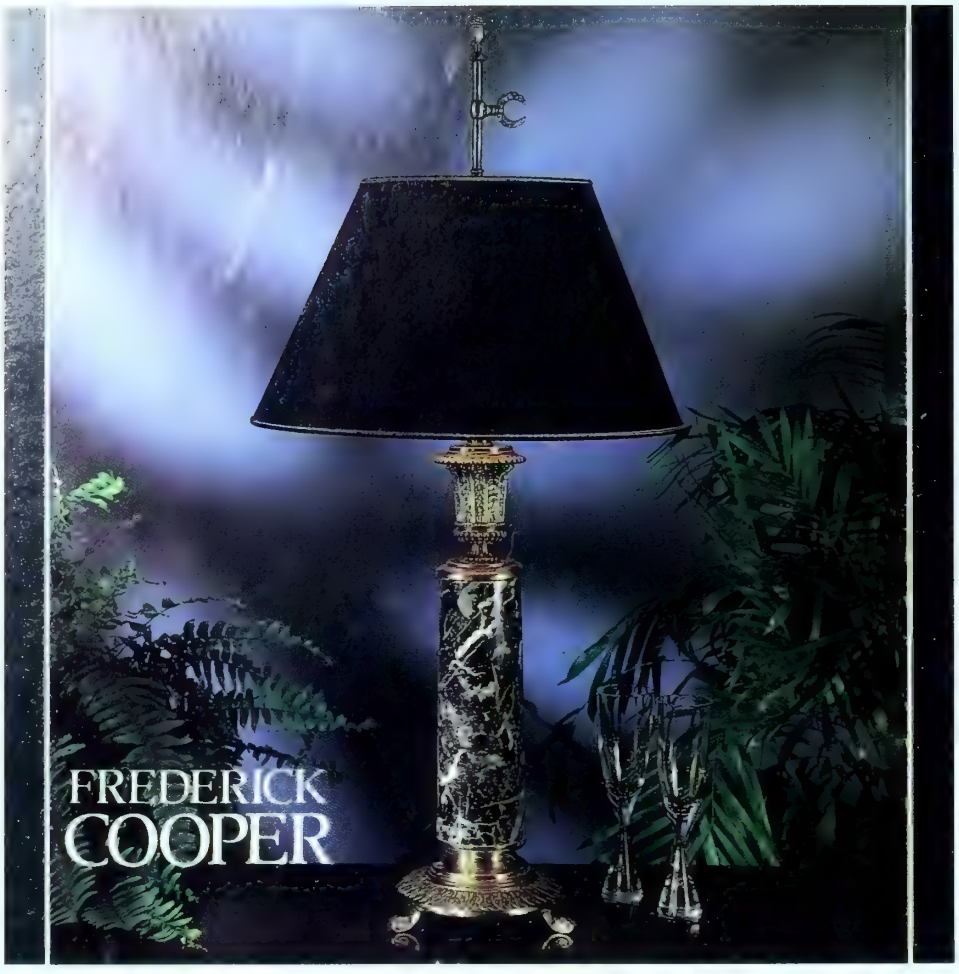
GLACE À LA LAVANDE
Lavender Praline Ice Cream

For the praline:
2 ounces superfine sugar
½ ounce lavender petals

For the ice cream:
1 cup milk
1 sprig lavender (plus extra to decorate)
4 egg yolks
2 ounces superfine sugar
1 cup heavy cream, lightly whipped

First make the praline. Put the sugar and lavender into a saucepan and melt over medium heat until brown and caramelized. Pour into a greased tray, cool, and then pound to a fine powder. To make the ice cream, bring the milk and lavender sprig just to a boil, remove from heat, cover, and leave to infuse for 30 minutes in a warm place. In the meantime beat together the egg yolks and sugar until creamy. Remove the lavender from the milk and whisk the milk into the sugar mixture. Heat slowly, stirring constantly until the custard coats the back of a wooden spoon. Cool. Fold the whipped cream gently and thoroughly into the custard. Spoon into a deep-freezer container, cover, and put in freezer. When the ice cream is half frozen, stir in the praline mixture, then refreeze. Stir well once more before the ice cream sets hard. Since lavender blooms only in summer, you may want to make and freeze a larger quantity of this ice cream. Makes 1½ pints. □

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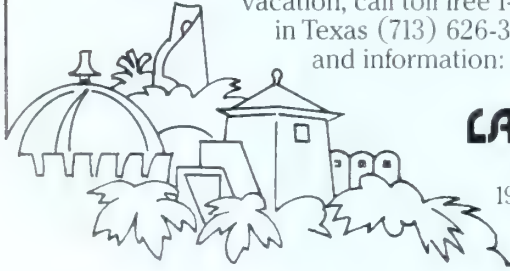
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Why did a Bolivian billionaire choose to build his 'dream world' in Manzanillo, Mexico?

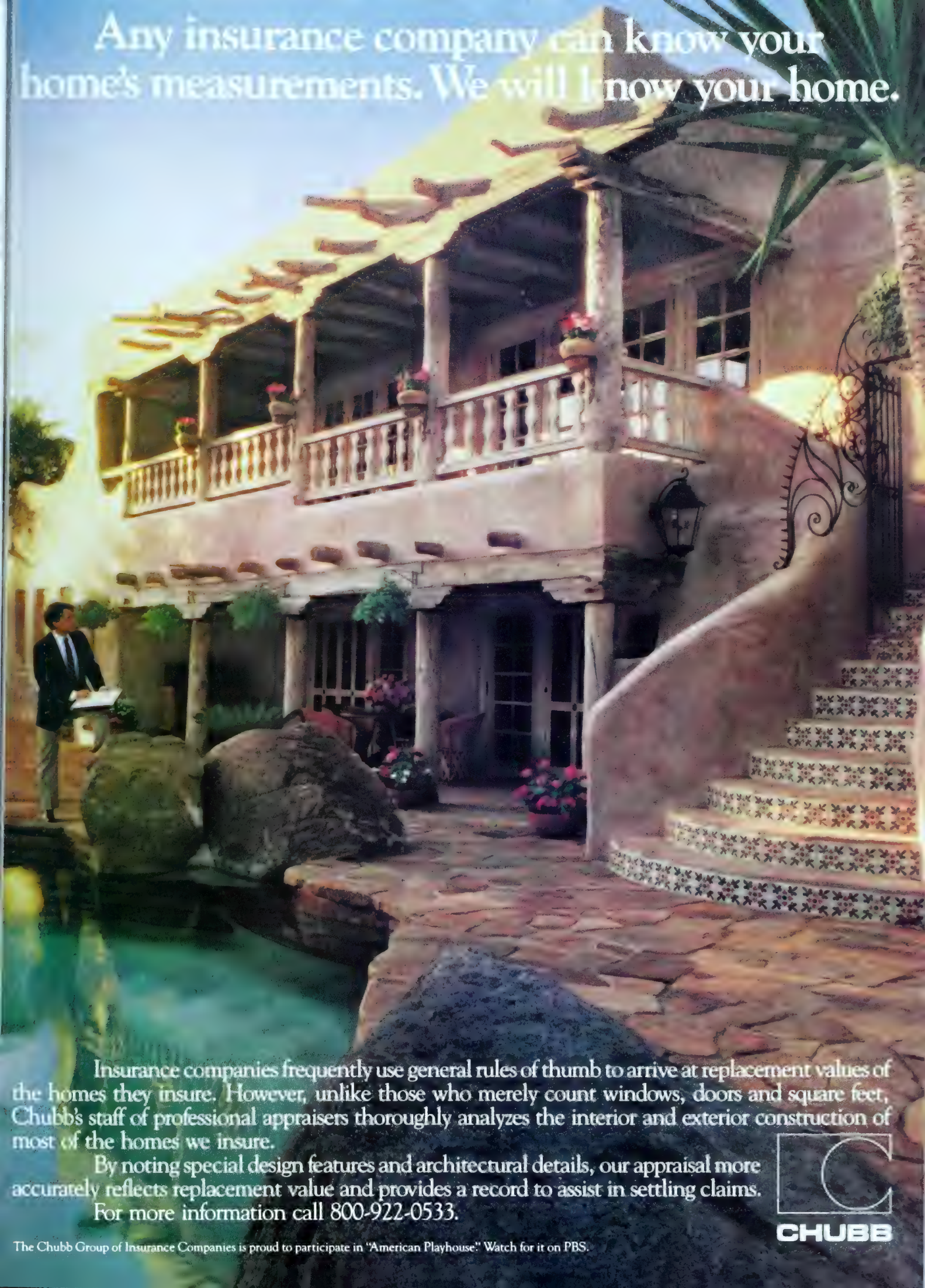
One visit to this magical setting will tell why. For this is an unequalled sun paradise—a place where each moment is a feast for the eye, soul and body. It is where lush palm covered hills slope gently to sandy beaches and calm bay waters. Where the air carries the scent of bougainvilleas and where time literally loses it's meaning.

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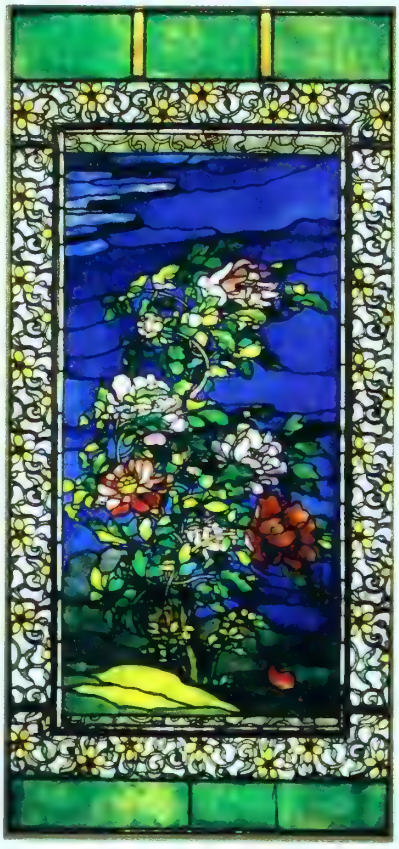
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LA FARGE AT LARGE



Peonies in the Wind with Kakemono Borders, c. 1893, stained glass.

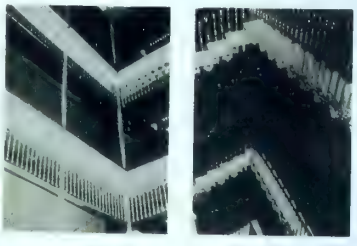
No artistic medium was considered sacred by John La Farge—generally hailed as the most versatile 19th-century American artist—who dabbled in countless visual modes of the major and minor arts and also wrote poetry and criticism. But no matter what the medium, La Farge's works exhibit the most forward-looking tendencies of his French contemporaries wedded with a strictly American conservatism. La Farge's creative impact lies not in any specific art form (though his development of opalescent stained glass is certainly significant) but in his enormous influence on the development of American thought through his close association with the likes of Henry and William James and other intellectuals of the day. The National Museum of American Art in Washington, D.C., will exhibit 111 of La Farge's diverse works through October 12. *Jennifer Royall*

AN ALBERS ALBUM



Paul Klee, Bauhaus, Dessau, 1929

Josef Albers's well-tempered variations on a palette of black, white, and gray—in paintings, graphics, and glass—compose an extended masterwork of inventive subtlety, a lifelong homage to elementary color and form. With the recent posthumous discovery of a previously unknown cache of photographs by Albers, we can now appreciate the transposition of his black-and-white oeuvre to a different key. A sample of the hundreds of vintage photo-



Hotel Staircases, Geneva, 1929

graphic prints now owned by the Josef Albers Foundation is at the Des Moines Art Museum, August 23 through October 18. Taken during the 1920s and '30s, the most original are collages juxtaposing discrete yet related images. Possibly inspired by stereographs and magazine layouts, these assemblages resonate with the gentle harmonies that permeate the artist's classic abstractions.

Douglas Brenner



Bullfight, Spain, c. 1930

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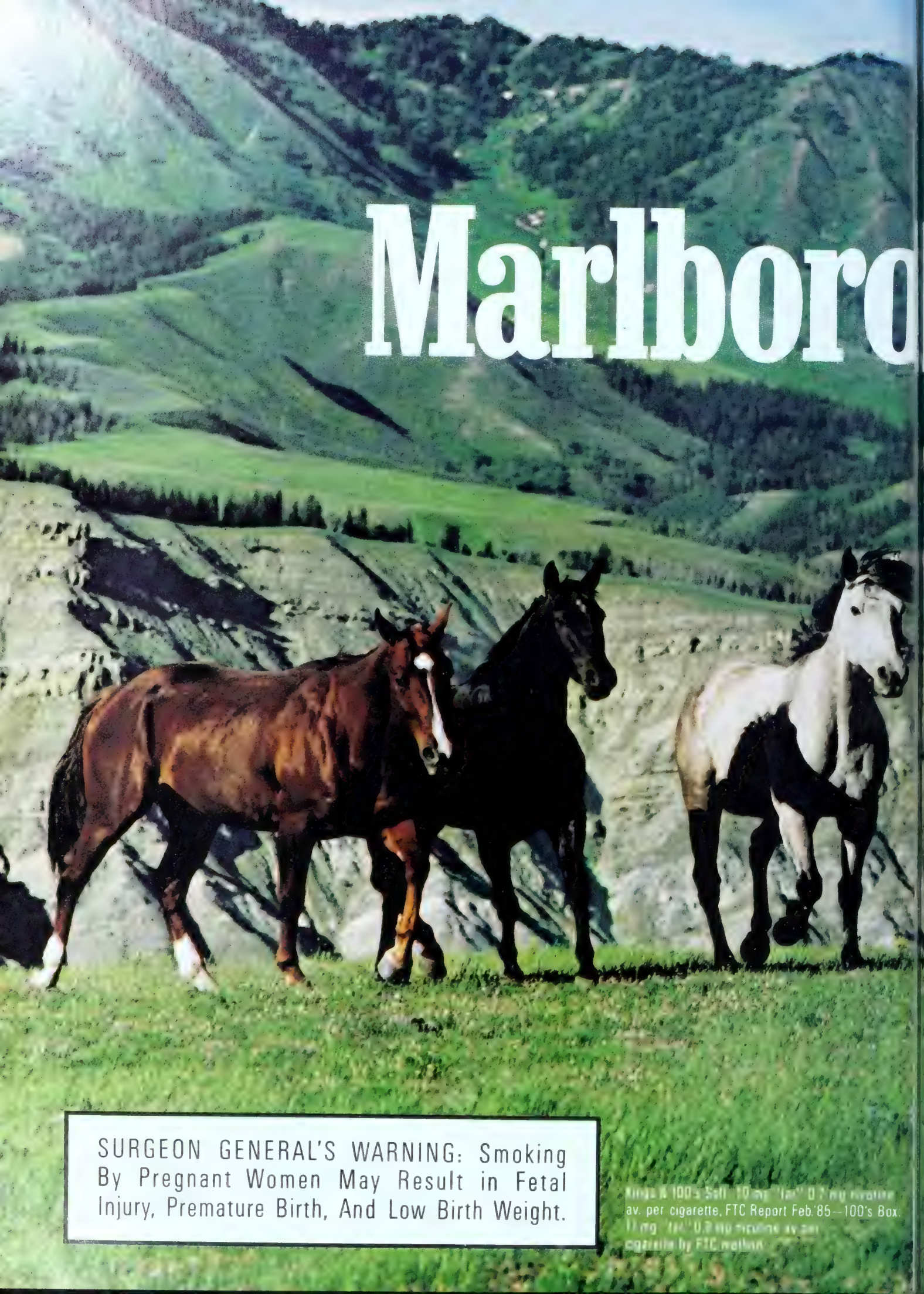
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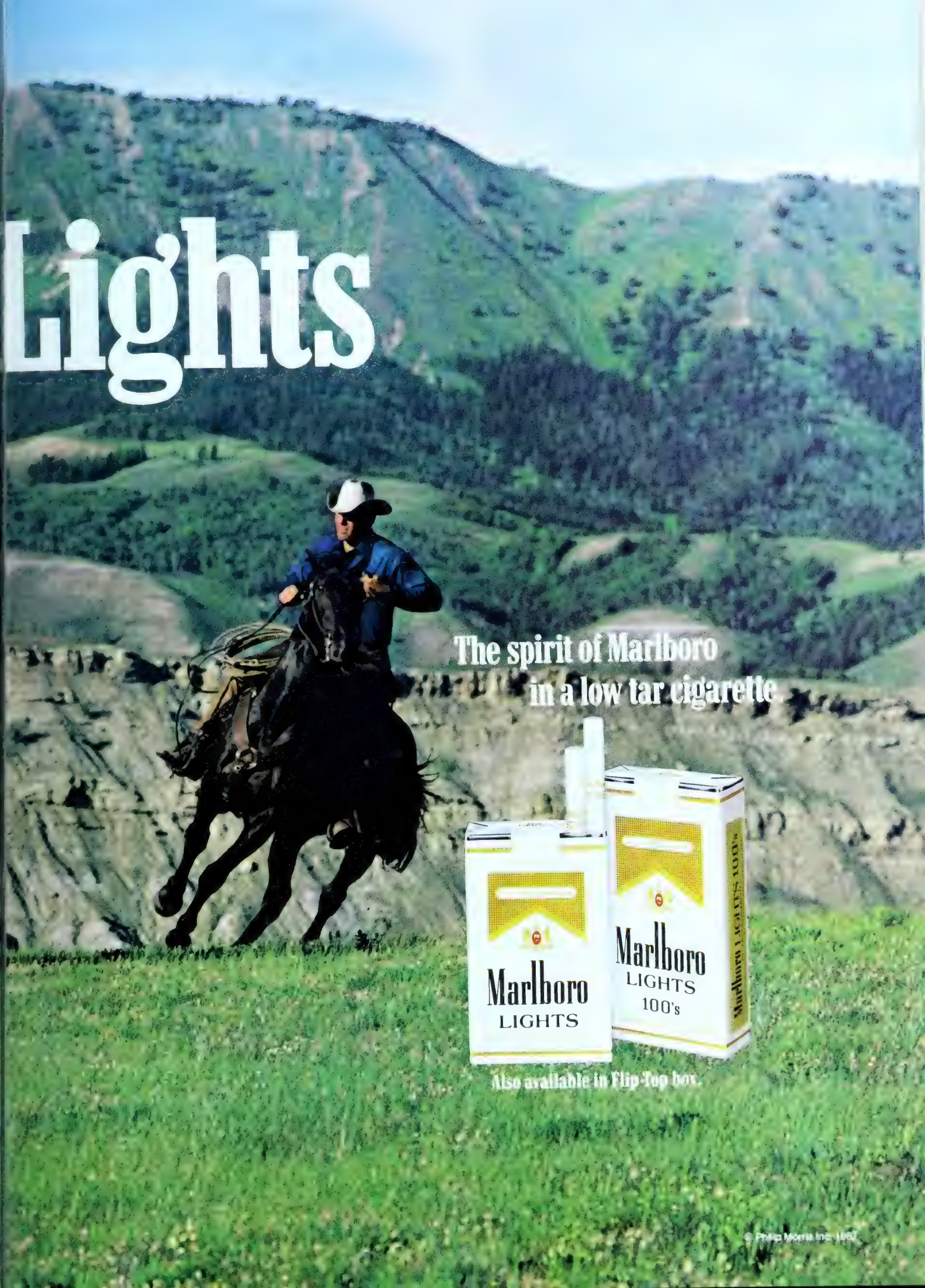


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BANKING LAND

Founded in 1891, Massachusetts' Trustees of Reservations is a continuing model for present-day attempts to preserve the past

By Rolce Redard Payne

Fifteen miles from downtown Boston dawn breaks over rolling meadow, salt marsh, and woodland. The cooing of mourning doves and the calls of countless shore birds are undisturbed by the roar of superhighway traffic rushing toward the city, well beyond a tranquil bit of land called World's End in Hingham, Massachusetts. This refreshing oasis of shrubs, trees, and water is preserved forever unspoiled because of the remarkable foresight of a young landscape architect in the nineteenth century.



Charles Eliot had traveled widely in Europe and England before returning to Boston to work with, and later to become partner to, the famous landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted. Perhaps this experience gave him the insight into the physical and emotional needs of those living in congested metropolitan areas for the refreshment of open skies and unspoiled land. In 1890, Eliot was only 31 years old when he conceived of an organization that would obtain and hold such places available for public use "just as the Public Library holds books and the Art Museum pictures—for the use and enjoyment of the public." He asserted that "if an association of this sort were once established, generous men and women would be ready to buy and give into its keeping some of these fine and strongly characterized works of Nature; just as others buy and give to a museum fine works of art."

Like so many other public institutions in Boston, such as the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the Boston Symphony, this new organization would need the generous support of the city's public-spirited old families. Charles Eliot, the son of Charles William Eliot, then president of Harvard University, was himself reared in the Yankee tradition that assumed the responsibility of privilege. With access to men of wealth and power he was able to test the feasibility of his scheme almost at once by presenting it to such influential men as Charles S. Sargent, director of the Arnold Arboretum, and George C. Mann, president of the Appalachian Mountain Club (of which Eliot was a council member). Their response was immediate and supportive.

Such was their interest and enthusiasm that by the following year, in 1891, the Trustees of Reservations was established "to preserve for public use and enjoyment historic and beautiful tracts of land within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts." Four years later the National Trust for Places of Historic Interest or Natural Beauty was founded in England, its articles of establishment patterned directly after those of the Trustees of



CYMIE PAYNE

Above: The rose arbor at Long Hill, the formal garden at the Trustees headquarters in Beverly, Massachusetts. *Left:* World's End in Hingham epitomizes the purpose of the Trustees, to preserve land just outside metropolitan areas.

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GARDEN PLEASURES

Reservations. The National Trust for Scotland was created in 1931, and in the United States the National Trust for Historic Preservation was founded in 1949. Now in its 96th year the Trustees is, as far as can be determined, the oldest preservation organization of its kind in the world.

The Trustees of Reservations has acquired by gift or purchase seventy properties varying in size from Redemption Rock's quarter acre in Princeton to the 3,000 acres of Notchview Reservation at Windsor. A total of 17,500 acres includes untouched woodlands and seashore, well-maintained historic houses, and formal gardens and makes it the commonwealth's largest private owner of conservation land. As a nonprofit charitable organization privately administered and independent of government, it relies for support on voluntary contributions, memberships, grants, and admission fees. In common with their fellow philanthropic institutions the Trustees can no longer depend on the handful of benefactors who in the past jealously guarded their "privilege" of fully underwriting favorite charities. With an increase in landholdings and in costs of maintenance and acquisition, the Trustees of Reservations is seeking a greater public awareness, leading to an increased membership.

A fourteen-member standing committee forms the governing board, which with members of an advisory council meets monthly. For many reservations a local committee assists in protection and fund-raising events. The full-time paid staff now totals 45 employees, often residents of the area in which a property is located. With this expanded staff additional space became a necessity and prompted the relocation in May 1986 of the administrative headquarters from Pierce House in Milton south of Boston to more spacious quarters available on the North Shore at Long Hill in Beverly.

Formerly the summer home of Ellery Sedgwick—noted author and editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*—Long Hill was given to the Trustees in 1979 by the Sedgwick family. In his second-floor office looking over the estate's gardens to distant views beyond the hundred acres of woodlands, the director, Frederic Winthrop Jr., describes a

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variety of ingenious schemes for protecting lands and judiciously controlling development where it is inevitable. "In management decisions," he states, "the Trustees of Reservations is always mindful of the donor's intent when the property was entrusted to us. Otherwise, we lose our credibility." That its credibility is intact may be seen in the annual donation of additional acreage, especially by abutters to Trustees' lands where stewardship practices have been observed. For the Trustees one solution to the increased costs of holding property has been to obtain conservation restrictions that limit the use of land in order to maintain its natural, scenic, and open condition but leave ownership in private hands.

While management of its many holdings is of first importance, the Trustees also makes available its expertise in conservation and land management to government, local organizations, and individuals and may operate in concert with others on land issues. For example, a proposed condominium resort of two hundred units adjoining the Trustees' reservation at Monument Mountain in Great Barrington with tennis courts, a swimming pool, and parking lots would lie directly in the sight lines from the mountain's famous Squaw Peak. This problem was handled cooperatively with the local citizens, who subsequently enacted legislation calling for a one-year moratorium on multifamily development. The Trustees of Reservations was able to reach an agreement in 1985 with the developer to purchase the 164 acres he held for the sum of $70,000. In 1986 a donation of another 65 acres of abutting land brought the holding to nearly 500 acres, thus preserving unsullied the view enjoyed by authors Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, and Oliver Wendell Holmes as they picnicked one summer's day in 1850.

While overall standards of maintenance have been devised, the needs are very individual. In a National Natural Landmark such as Bartholomew's Cobble in Ashley Falls the primary requirement is for protection of its very special features of scenic beauty, rare plants, and birds. The picturesque Housatonic River winds at the base of limestone knolls or cobbles where an outstanding collection of native plants grows—in fact some 700 species—and the woodlands, fields, and meadows are home to over 230 species of birds. The strategy here is to have well-defined trails for strolling, with an excellent map in hand, on a self-guided tour of particular features and to have a well-informed overseer on the premises. By contrast, Naumkeag in Stockbridge requires skilled and constant care of beautifully terraced gardens and a fully furnished Shingle-style house, designed by Stanford White in 1885 as a summer home for Joseph Hodges Choate, U.S. ambassador to the Court of St. James's during Queen Victoria's reign. Included in the surrounding gardens is a woodland promenade, a unique rose garden with serpentine beds, a terrace shaded with garlands of vines draped on gaily painted Venetian-style posts, and a walled Chinese garden designed to display the carved stone figures and lanterns brought back from the Far Eastern travels of Choate's daughter, Mabel. Also in Stockbridge, with similar needs for curator and gardener, is the Mission House, built in 1739 as the home of John Sargeant, first missionary to the Stockbridge Indians. The two-story weathered clapboard house is a charming summer picture when its silver gray siding is the background for pale pink phlox blooming in the dooryard perennial garden.

In keeping with Eliot's concept of acquiring "bits of land well distributed," the Trustees' holdings are spread to all areas of the state. Among the other historic houses are the Old Manse in Concord where both Nathaniel Hawthorne and Ralph Waldo Emerson lived and the William Cullen Bryant Homestead in Cummington where the poet and editor spent his boyhood and later his summers. Here the land is retained as a traditional farm with the fields kept under cultivation by lease to local farmers, a policy followed in other parts of the state to retain the pastoral quality and add to the ever-diminishing supply of land affordable to farmers. Other spots with special natural features have such intriguing names as Appleton Farms Grass Rides, Petticoat Hill, Bear's Den, Misery Islands, Halibut Point (Haul-About Point), and Mytoi on Chappaquiddick.

The seashore presents yet another challenge for care and use. Perhaps nowhere else does the combined need for preservation and public access place more demand on resources and ingenuity than at the Richard T. Crane Jr. Memorial Reservation in Ipswich. Its 1,400 acres encompass miles of white sand beach and dunes, salt marsh, a pitch-pine forest, and a fine estate with a mansion overlooking the sea across a statuary-lined grande allée and gardens designed by landscape architects Arthur A. Shurtleff and the Olmsted Brothers. The beach, one of the most beautiful north of Cape Cod, is open to the public. Boardwalks to the beach have been placed for protection of the dunes (a vigorous growth of poison ivy reinforces compliance), and parking areas, controlled access, and wardens on duty ensure appropriate use. More ecologically fragile, the nearby islands and salt marsh of the Cornelius and Miné S. Crane Wildlife Refuge can be reached only by small boats.

Properties on the islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket also receive some protection from a body of water. The limited capacity of the island ferries puts a natural restriction on the influx of tourists, and an even smaller number of these are likely to seek out the more remote beaches and refuges. In Martha's Vineyard, Chappaquiddick Island requires yet another ferry ride for those wishing to enjoy the fishing, birding, and endless beach walking that it offers.

The number and quality of the properties entrusted to the Trustees of Reservations since its inception confirms Charles Eliot's prophecy that "generous men and women" would donate their time and money and, most precious, their land to such a well-founded organization. That they continue to do so is a mark of the confidence placed in the wise and conscientious stewardship of the Trustees as it approaches its centenary. □



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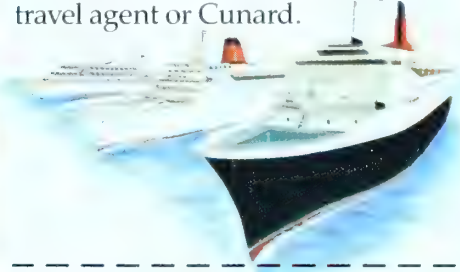
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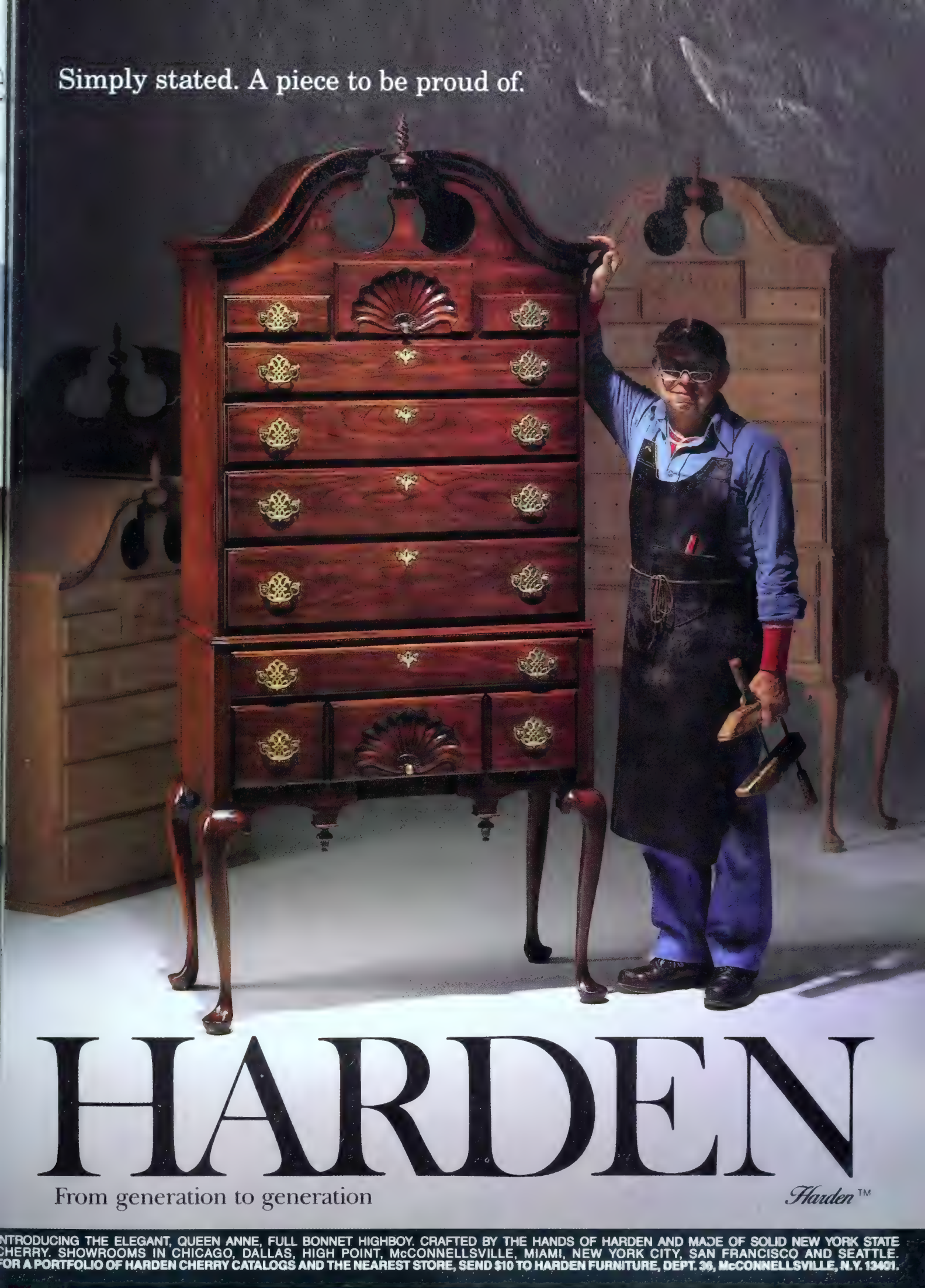
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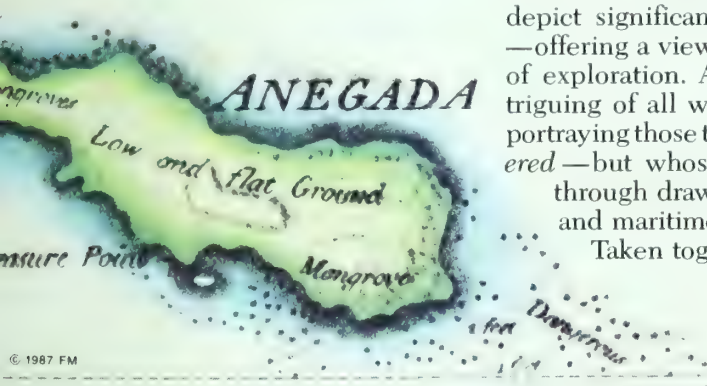
There will be coins showing the great riches of empire ... bejeweled rings, exquisite works of silver and gold, royal revenue and private wealth that never reached its destination. Other coins will depict significant archaeological finds —offering a view of life during the age of exploration. And perhaps most intriguing of all will be the silver coins portraying those treasures still *undiscovered* —but whose existence is known through drawings, ships' manifests, and maritime disaster reports.

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What's new, what's noteworthy

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SHEER GLAMOUR

Newly introduced translucent curtain fabrics, *above,* from Gretchen Bellinger: Can Can, a dotted swiss in cotton ($65 a yard), and Prima Donna, Lurex squares on silk ($115 a yard), seen here on two background colors. Both fabrics made in three colorways. Sold through designers.

BERIBBONED RUG

A new and immediately popular addition to Patterson, Flynn & Martin's Potpourri II collection is Kerri, *right,* based on the perennial favorite ribbon-and-bow motif that originated in 18th-century France. The all-wool pile rug retails at $52 per square foot and is made to order in any size and color. Sold through designers.





COLORFUL TRADITION

Florence de Dampierre's new book—justly called *The Best of Painted Furniture* (Rizzoli, $35)—is filled with elegant pieces like this English caned chair, *left,* painted with a putto and a hobnail border, *below.*



ORNAMENTAL

The J. P. Weaver Company of Burbank, Calif., produces over 8,000 finely detailed composition ornaments, *below,* using a method that originated in Italy in the 16th century. These traditional architectural ornaments of wood rosin, shellac, glue, and whiting, which are pliable and self-bonding, should last at least 150 years. Weaver moldings, friezes, fireplaces, and exterior door surrounds, which can be gilded, are found in buildings ranging from the Hearst castle at San Simeon to the Golden Nugget casinos. Available through architects and designers or directly from the company, which has produced a two-volume limited edition portfolio ($285) and offers seminars on ornament application and design. Call (818) 841-5700.



SCOTLAND BY TRAIN

The luxury train *Royal Scotsman* is running weekly six-day tours through Scotland this fall with their usual first-rate guides. Prices start at $3,190. Call your travel agent or Abercrombie & Kent, (800) 323-7308.

TABLE LAMPS, CURTAIN FABRICS, EDWARD ADDEO; RUG, WERNER STEGEMEYER
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THE AURA



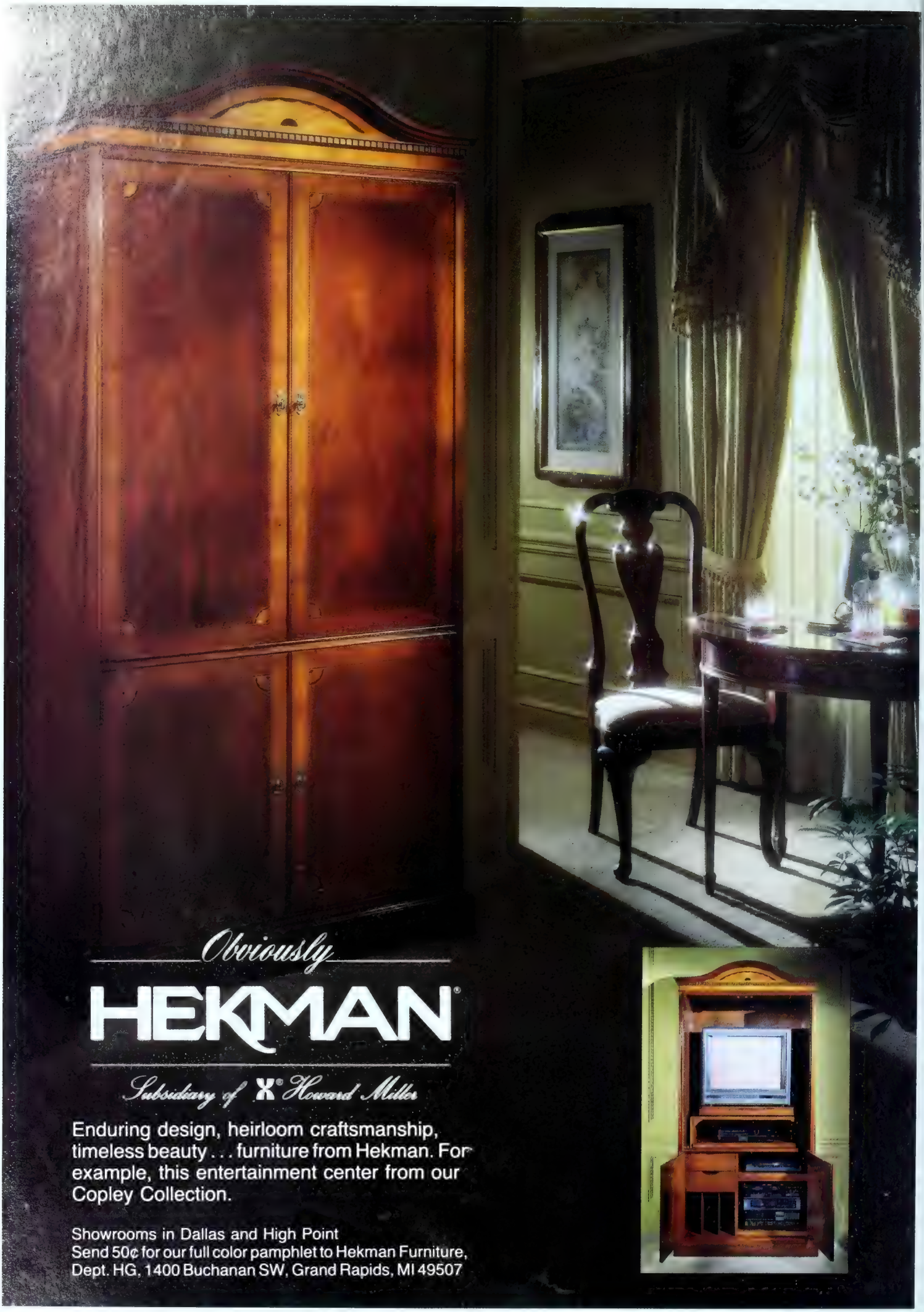
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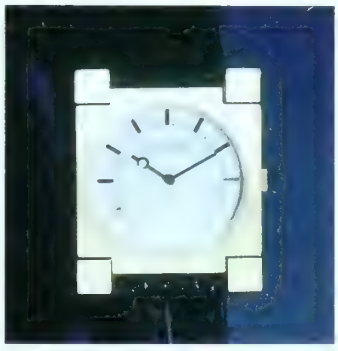


Michael Graves

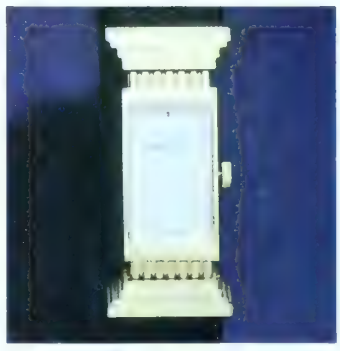


Hans Hollein









TIMELY ARCHITECTURE

Italian jeweler Cleto Munari has commissioned watches, *above,* from some of the world's most gifted architects, shown above their designs. The jewelry, made of 18-karat gold, is on display at the Memphis Brooks Museum, Tennessee, through August 20. Limited editions range from $700 to $22,000. For information call Roberta Matthews (214) 742-4320.

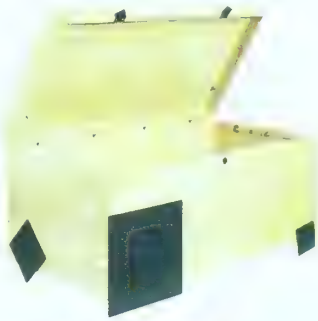


A TREASURY OF JAPANESE PAPERS

If you're a painter, calligrapher, picture framer, bookbinder, gift wrapper, or devotee of origami, Aiko's Japanese papers, some examples *above,* offer an inspiring range of colors, patterns, and textures. For thirty years the store has been selling traditional Japanese art materials. A sample book of two hundred papers is $20; the store catalogue is $1.50. 714 North Wabash, Chicago 60611.

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Artist Robert Wilhite's wood objects are fully functional, finely crafted works of art. Parallelogram hope chest, *below,* of red lacquered hardwood with cedar lining, is $6,000; maple blanket box, *right,* is $4,000. At Stephen Wirtz Gallery, San Francisco, (415) 433-6879.





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SEA-STRUCK LIVING

At a hidden house in Malibu, memories of life on other coasts

By Brian Moore

Wallace Stevens once wrote, "The final belief is to believe in a fiction which you know to be a fiction." That statement comes to mind when I think about my house.

I have lived in apartments and in houses in London, Paris, Warsaw, Montreal, and New York. But in all those years I remained nomadic and unsatisfied, believing in a fiction. The fiction was of a secret place, one I used to dream of as a small boy when I lived in my parents' tall, ugly Victorian residence in the bleak city of Belfast. My secret place was to be a sort of tree house, hidden away from outsiders, a place I could furnish in any way I fancied, where, if I broke a plate or lay with my feet up on a sofa, no one would reprove me. It would contain my books and toys and enough food and sweets to withstand a siege. I would live there in a state of perfect happiness.

And now, in recent years, I have at last come to believe in my fiction. In reality, I live in a rather raffish one-story beach house that sits alone on a bluff overlooking the Pacific Ocean in Malibu, California. But in my mind it has become the secret place of my childhood. There are sofas to lie on and plates to break. The house is in a lonely place, hidden away from outsiders. It contains my books and mementos and enough food and wine to withstand a siege. I live there, with my wife, in a state of perfect happiness.





The choice of this house as a place to live has another link with my childhood. My father, a surgeon born in the days of Queen Victoria, thought of summer holidays as long walks on the seashore with his family in attendance. And although he did not marry until he was fifty years old, he made up for lost time by having nine children. Each summer he would rent a large house somewhere on the Irish coast, and so for me a house by the sea has always had a holiday aura of long light-filled days, picnics on the strand, rock pools to explore. My wife, a Nova Scotian, is similarly sea-struck. Her grandfather was a boatbuilder in Newfoundland.

And so, when we came to Los Angeles eighteen years ago for a three-month working visit, we drove along the coast searching for a place to rent. On the border linking Ventura and Los Angeles counties we found a lonely beach. We drove down a small access

Above: Brian and Jean Moore. *Left:* Three sets of French doors open onto the flower-filled terrace at the house in Malibu overlooking the beach, which local surfers call Point Zero.

WILLIAM WAITHORN



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IMPRESSIONS

road and saw three beach houses on the sands. We saw no house on the bluff. With the condescension of registered New Yorkers we told each other that if one *had* to live in California, this would be the place. Of course, it was out of the question. The beach was at the outermost limit of the 27-mile-long area known as Malibu, up to an hour's drive from Santa Monica. It was four miles from the nearest small grocery store and gas station. Besides we were here for three months. No more.

A few days later my wife came to me in a state of excitement. We drove out again along Pacific Coast Highway past the small grocery store and gas station and down a driveway to a house on a bluff overlooking a beach. It was a rambling structure, alone in an acre of land. There were trees and flowers and shrubbery in a wild profusion that reminded me of a disused and ghostly English garden. And when we went into the house, we came upon a large drawing room with a fireplace, brick floors, a fourteen-foot-high beamed ceiling, and three sets of tall French doors opening onto a large terrace. Beyond the terrace, immense, illimitable, the Pacific Ocean.

We walked out and stared. A hundred yards from shore, long breakers cruised, white and splendid, pluming in to die on a lonely strand. Silent, graceful, sinister, a file of six pelicans skimmed the rim of a wave searching for fish, turning in plummeting dives to crash down on their prey. And suddenly, excitedly, we realized this was the same beach we had seen a few days earlier.

The rental agent said that the house was empty for the winter months. She said the rent would be reasonable because the house was too far from Los Angeles for easy commuting. She said there were four bedrooms. She must have said other things, but I did not hear them. I was in that state I have often seen occur when people walk out on our terrace. The house, like a loved object, is seen without fault. The fiction has begun.

Of course we were never going to live there. Los Angeles has always been *terra non grata* in literary circles, and Malibu then, as now, is considered a particularly pejorative address. We had already established our modus vivendi: a rent-controlled apartment in Gramercy Park, New York; summers in Europe and Canada. But in our first winter in the house we discovered that for us, as for most of the people who live in the Malibu area, the film-star colonies, beach boys, and boozy parties are yet another fiction, something we see not in real life but in the movies.

Instead our house borders on a harsher, more primitive world than any I have known. Directly behind us are mountains and canyons which are still part of the American wilderness. Coyotes hunt there, as do rattlesnakes and red-tailed hawks. Wild and shy raccoons, skunks, and deer risk death when they venture onto Pacific Coast Highway. Giant puffballs of tumbleweed, big as hippopotami, amble down our driveway in dreamlike indif-

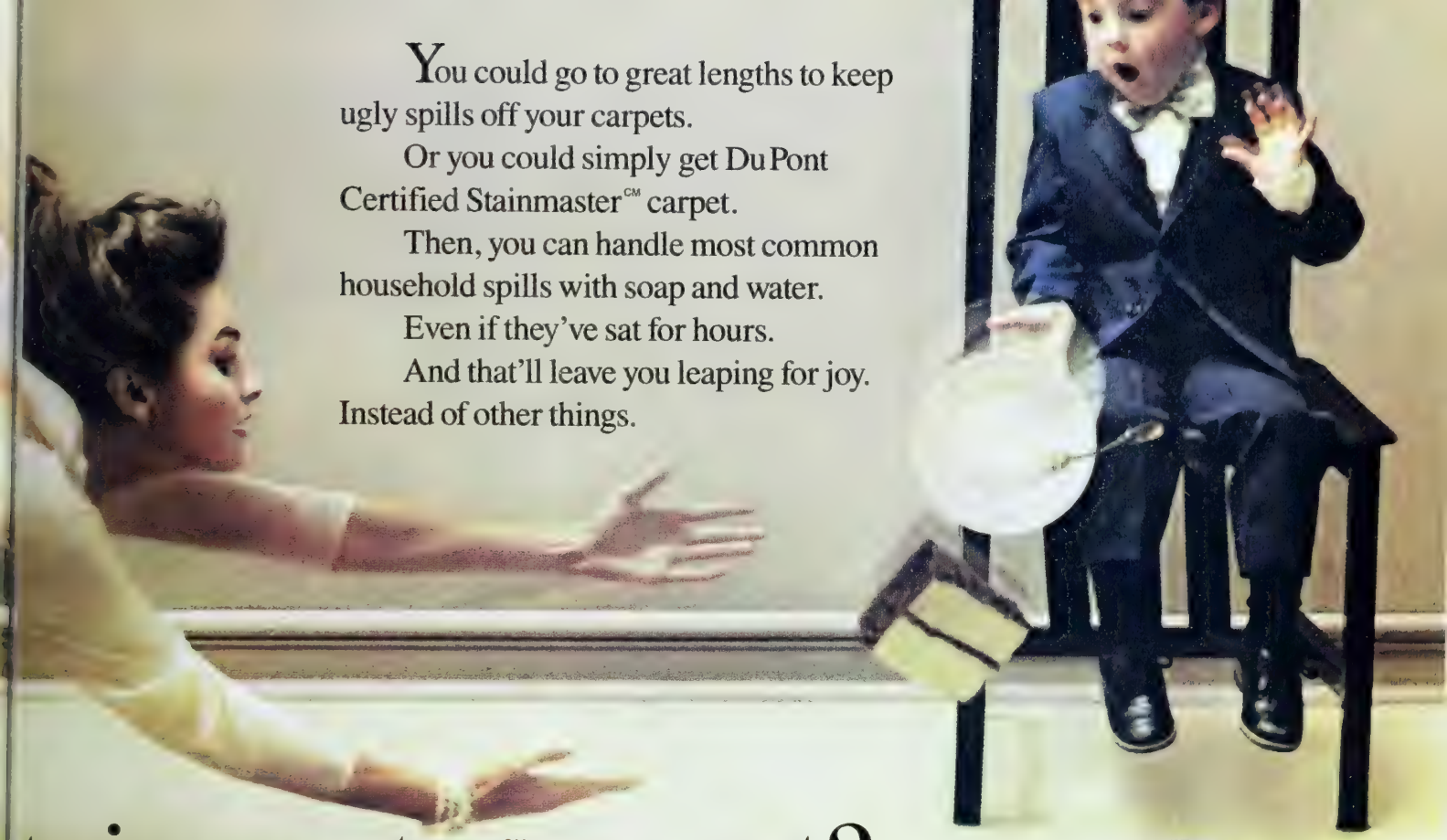
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ference. Annually, from the tinder-dry hills behind us, brush fires sweep down to the sea, traveling faster than a man can run, burning all before them in a biblical rage.

Floods have menaced us with piles of sliding mud which can lift a house off its foundations. We have cool morning mists and exquisite sunsets, but sometimes the sea turns slate gray and the terrace goes hot and dry as a furnace room, a litmus test that the Santa Ana winds, which bring brush fires and cafard, have slipped in in silence, like bedouin from the desert. And then, of course, there are moments, sudden as a trip to eternity, when our windows rattle and the brick floors tremble beneath us as a small earthquake registers its passing on the Richter scale.

Our house has survived all this, and more. It is probably fifty years old, antique by local standards. By my rough reckoning, the first owner also began the house as a very large room—with French doors overlooking the present terrace—with perhaps a small bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen tacked onto the main structure. The walls are of redwood, without any insulation. The old brick floors have survived the earth's shocks. Subsequent owners have added rooms, a corridor, and an extra bathroom in a topsy-turvy manner, in much the same way I would have built my tree house of old. We have converted a bedroom into my workroom and, using old brick and railroad ties laid in concrete, have greatly added to the terrace and walks.

For the house is, in reality, two dwellings: the one we live in and the one out of doors. The ocean is a theater, endlessly fascinating. Great gray whales, coming down from the Bering Strait on their annual pilgrimage to Baja California, pass within two hundred yards of our terrace. Seals and cormorants perch on rocks, ignoring those other seabirds, the surfers who sit each dawn out beyond the breakers waiting to be wafted toward our door.

I say *our* door because after that first winter we found ourselves lonely for the loneliness of this house. And so we rented it for a second winter. And when one day on the spur of the moment its owner decided to sell it, we, on the spur of the moment, moved our few goods and chattels from New York and accepted the inevitability of those accidents that shape our lives. We still summer each year in Europe but, after writing eight novels in the same workroom, I have accepted the fiction that this is my home.

Of course, for the writer who has chosen self-exile from his native country, there is no perfect place to write. Had I remained in New York, I would have written different novels. For when I look at the books I have written here, I see in almost all of them the hidden presence of the ocean and the beauty of this place. The surfers, perennial as the seasons, have a name for our beach. It is Point Zero. That seems appropriate. For a writer Point Zero is the place one returns to, to begin again. □

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JOURNAL

On the arts scene

CULTURE COUNTRY CLUB



The most envied architectural job of the eighties has surely been the design of the J. Paul Getty Center in Los Angeles, bestowed on Richard Meier in 1985. His preliminary site model, *right,* for the 742-acre spread in L.A.'s Brentwood section reveals a veritable hill town to encompass an ambitious program including a new museum, offices for the Getty Trust, a conservation institute, art history information and grant programs, an auditorium, and restaurants. A big question remains unanswered by the highly schematic forms: given Meier's predilection for gleaming white glass-wall structures, how will he deal with fenestration and materials for a client who pointedly asked for a departure from the architect's familiar mode? *Martin Filler*

VICTORY AT TRAFALGAR

Prince Charles denounced an earlier proposal for an addition to London's National Gallery as a "carbuncle," and the controversy spurred a competition for a new design, won by the Philadelphia firm of Venturi, Rauch & Scott Brown. Their Mannerist scheme for the Sainsbury Wing, *below,* cleverly accommodates the irregular site at the northwest corner of Trafalgar Square and provides a strong terminus to William Wilkins's galumphing Neoclassical façade of 1832–38. VR&SB, subject of a fine new monograph by Stanislaus von Moos (Rizzoli, $60, $37.50 paper), has long been burdened with the unwarranted reputation of Pop pranksters, but this learned and sympathetic solution proves their great skill at handling serious, prestigious civic commissions. *M.F.*







INTERIOR DIMENSIONS

Architect-journalist C. Ray Smith has accomplished what no doubt was a herculean task in writing *Interior Design in Twentieth-Century America: A History* (Harper & Row, $24.95). Organized by decade, the 350-page book profiles and records the work of every notable figure in interior decoration and architecture and includes historical and social influences as well as work by many foreign designers. Filled with black-and-white and color photos, plans, and a valuable bibliography following each chapter, it illustrates such interiors as Mrs. Archibald Brown's New York living room, *left above,* and Frank Lloyd Wright's guest bedroom at Fallingwater, *left below.* *Gabrielle Winkel*

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REGAL NEEDLES

"Marie Antoinette and Napoleon are still my best customers," says Marie Brocard of the two-hundred-year-old Paris atelier

By Sheila de Rochambeau



Founded in 1775 in the shadow of the Bastille, Atelier Brocard belies all that that unhappy castle represented. It has successfully served the royal and imperial families of France in a unique and devoted fashion for more than two hundred years. To name but a few of the chef d'oeuvres of needlework produced over the past two centuries by the Brocard family: coronation robes for Napoleon and Josephine (1804); the throne of the Palais des Tuileries, also for Napoleon (1806); the throne of Louis XVIII (1820); crib hangings for the Prince Impérial (1855); Empress Eugénie's carriage interior (1860); the restoration of Josephine's bedroom at Malmaison (1905); several restorations at Versailles, including the fabulous curtains of the Marie Antoinette theater (1955); the embroidered bedclothes, chairs, folding stools, and firescreen and the specially woven panels of Marie Antoinette's bedroom; and the bedroom of Louis XIV, which took ten years and was completed in 1975. Through the years Atelier Brocard has been solely responsible for restoring all needlework at Malmaison; four times since its construction they have worked on Napoleon's bedroom, most recently in 1980. And just this past year they completed restorations at Fontainebleau.

Above: Having made this gown for the empress Josephine, the Atelier Brocard restores it for the collection at Malmaison. *Below:* Working on an embroidered panel.



Marie Brocard, who runs the atelier founded by her ancestors, says that without a doubt her best customers have been Napoleon and Marie Antoinette. At one point, around 1980, nearly 95 percent of the work done by Brocard was restoration for the Musées Nationaux—much of it on tapestries and needlepoint and embroidered hangings created by Madame Brocard's forbears for various royal residences. Today, because of the cutback in government funding for such work, the atelier concentrates as much on commissions from private clients as on museum restorations. Nevertheless, they are still retained by the Louvre to restore the museum's antique tapestries, including treasured pieces from Ferrara, Beauvais, Aubusson, and Gobelins.

"Anything that can be done with thread and needles, eyes and hands is in our domain," says Madame Brocard. In the atelier, at 1, rue Jacques-Coeur in the Faubourg-Saint-Antoine, white-smocked needlewomen of every age work at long trestle tables. On a visit not long ago, one woman was putting the finishing touches on the canopy of a bed designed for Empress Marie Louise and destined for installation at the Château de Compiègne. With a canopy of diaphanous white muslin embroidered with heavy gold

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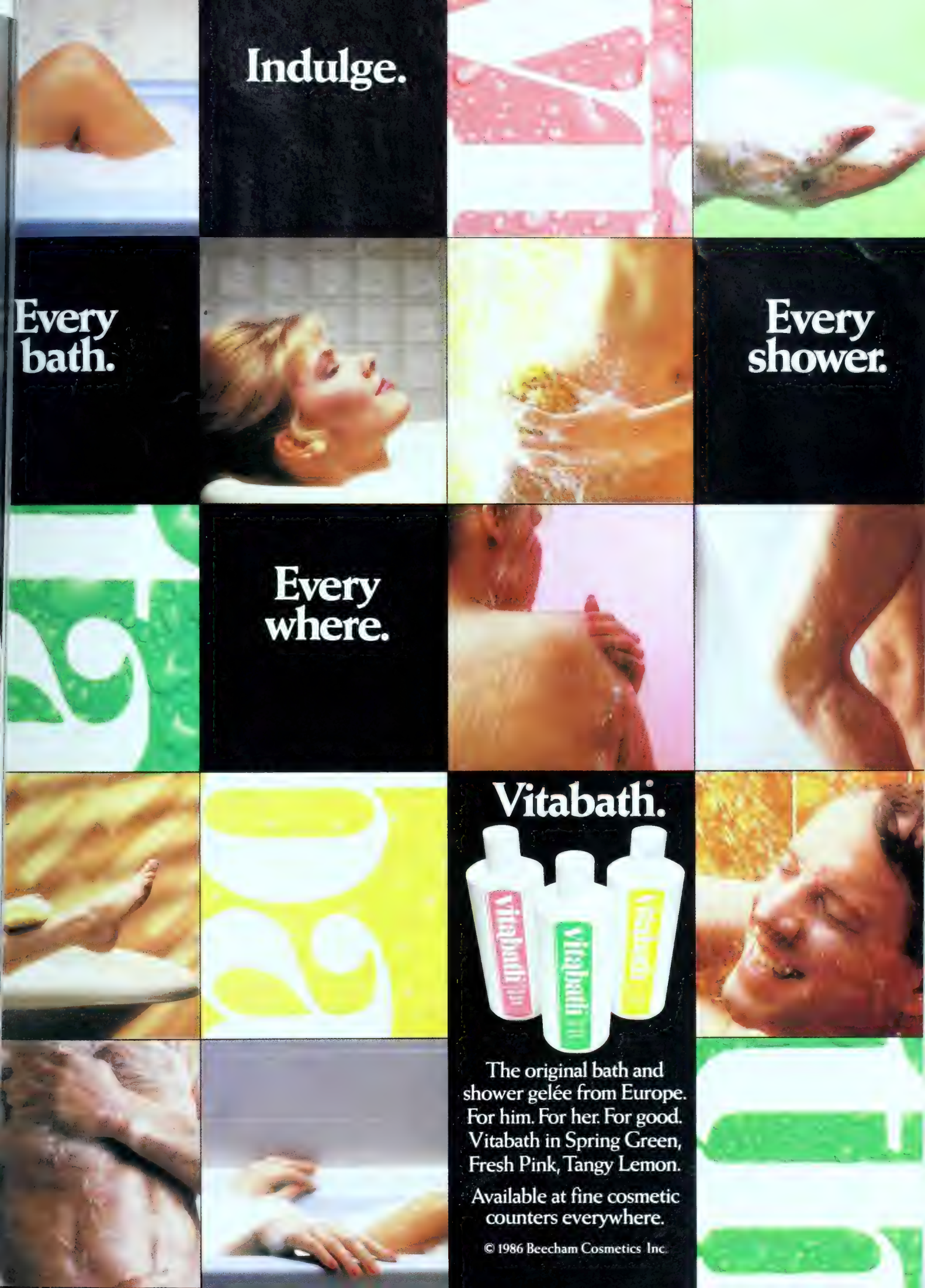
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Above: Detail of sample cabinet containing hundreds of fabrics from the past four hundred years. *Right:* The studio, where ten needleworkers work with Madame Brocard.

thread, the bed took four years to complete, the embroidery progressing at a rate of two centimeters per hour. Another needleworker was repairing Napoleonic military standards belonging to the Musée des Invalides. Yet another was embroidering a bedspread with butterflies for the restoration at Fontainebleau. Madame Brocard herself was examining a sixteenth-century Ferrara tapestry depicting one of the metamorphoses from Ovid.

All of this is business as usual at Brocard, which also handles work for private clients who may appear with four Louis XV bergères originally restored and upholstered by Madame Brocard's parents or grandparents, and now needing additional repair. The owner of a sixteenth-century mansion in the Loire Valley has asked her to restore a sixteenth-century tapestry made originally by the Bonnes-Soeurs d'Ursulines. None of these projects is undertaken lightly, for they often take months, even years, to complete.

In addition to the restorations on existing fabrics and tapestries, Madame Brocard also creates new designs that can scarcely be distinguished from the old. Atelier Brocard's stencils are based on ancient patterns, documented by the atelier's extensive collection of samples from the past four hundred years. In fact, the Brocard collection of samples and documents from the past is considered so important it has been put on microfilm by the National Archives in Paris where students of the art may consult it. The motto of the house of Brocard is *Fidélité à l'objet*: nothing is done in the name of restoration that would not be faithful to the original.

While Madame Brocard's ancestors on her mother's side were originally lacemakers, her father's forbears were experts in the art of needlework. No one is sure exactly when the first family atelier was started, but in 1775, a member of the family, Augustin Picot, set up shop in Paris in the Faubourg-Saint-Antoine, the district still known for its needlework and fine furnishings establishments. In the years before the Revolution, Picot became a favored supplier of needlework for the nobility, and when violent change came to France, Picot wisely burned the records of his clientele in order to save his neck. During the Directoire he received commissions from France's new rulers, and when it came time for Napoleon's coronation, Picot was there to create appropriately elaborate silk robes, embroidered with heavy gold thread for both the emperor and Josephine. As part of the Napoleonic effort to restore national pride and unity, the arts were encouraged and many commissions fell to Atelier Brocard. After the restoration Brocard did virtually everything of importance for the monarchy, including even the crib hangings for the young Prince Impérial.

Today Madame Brocard works in the very same studio run by her parents and her grandparents before her. It is a long, large room with daylight streaming in from large windows and strands of brightly colored silk sorted and stored in open bins against one wall. One of the specialties of the atelier today are luxurious slippers—*pantoufles*—embroidered with a design of the client's choice and initialed inside.

As the professional needleworkers quietly go about their painstaking work, in a nearby room Madame Brocard conducts private lessons in needlepoint and embroidery for both beginners and advanced students. (These lessons have become important to the business as a way to supplement some of the income no longer forthcoming from the Musées Nationaux.) Surrounded by evidence of the diligence of needleworkers past and present, the students also gain inspiration from Madame Brocard's remarks about the work of the atelier: "At the Victor Hugo house on the island of Guernsey, where we did the restoration before the centenary, the wall hangings were made of pearls, copper, gold, and red chenille." Or: "At Versailles we used thousands of yards of 45-percent gold thread to repair Louis XIV's summer bed." For the devotee of the art of the needle, this indeed is the stuff of legend. □

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RENDEZVOUS IN MALI

Discovering the land of great kings and lost cities in the songs of the griots

By James Fox



Far left: Griot Dembo Konte and pupil playing 21-stringed koras. *Left:* The baobab tree. *Below:* Author James Fox and singer Fanta Sacko. *Bottom:* The Bamako train station on the old French-built Dakar-to-Niger railway.

You will rarely hear of anyone traveling for pleasure in Mali, except to visit the great handmade mud mosques at Mopti or Djénné on the road eastward toward Timbuktu. But there is a way to negotiate these parts that can put you quickly in touch with the rich old culture of Senegal and Mali and, if you want, with much of West Africa and with some spectacularly dramatic landscapes. In April I traveled along the old French-built Dakar-to-Niger railway in search of the music of the savanna and the brilliant clear-voiced singers of Mali. For its sophistication and complexity it is the most beautiful music you will hear in Africa: sensuous, melodic, grand in sentiment with great subtlety of rhythm, quite unlike the reedy pentatonic chants of the Sahara to the north.

The key to this journey were the two griots I had as traveling companions and guides. They are powerful figures in this culture: hereditary praise singers, oral historians of prodigious recall, and keepers of the people's memory. In addition, they are often the protégés of rich and powerful men, and their network is immense. Their language, Mandinka, is spoken in Mali, Senegal, Guinea, Guinea Bissan, Burkina Faso, the Ivory Coast, and the Gambia—the countries of the old Mali empire. They play the fabled kora, the 21-stringed instrument that is a mixture of harp and lute and whose range and beauty always seem to astonish Western musicians hearing it for the first time; the griot's historic profession is traveling in search of patronage, and you could have no better companions on the road.

I already knew these two men well from their music: Amadu Jobarteh, 73, a revered musician from the Gambia who plays the stately Bach-like upper-river style and is an expert on the Koran, which he knows by heart; Dembo Konte, tall, handsome, imperious, a man of quick and caustic wit with more than one wife and mistress, who plays in the flashier coastal style. For both men politics is remote. Mali is simply the East, a mystical land, the spiritual home of all dispersed Mandinka speakers, the source of their musical inspiration and their repertoire; it is the land of great kings and lost cities, which their songs describe. "Without us," they sing, "the names of kings would vanish into oblivion. We are the memory of mankind." The greatest of all is Sunjata, the warrior king who

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Dembo Konte paid a visit to a crocodile shrine, a small pool covered in dense vegetation where a collection of small white crocodiles has lived for generations miles away from any river

founded the Mali empire, who they compare in stature only with Alexander the Great. In Bamako the newspaper is called after him; he is on the matchboxes and soft-drink labels and in the lyrics of the electric bands.

Neither of them had ever been to Mali. It was indeed harder to get to than the United States, where they had given concerts. Like many musicians, their grandfathers had migrated to the Gambia in the late nineteenth century to be near the last remaining kings and chiefs along the Gambia River. It had been a source of great grief to Amadu Jobarteh, whose father was in his seventies when he was born, that he would never see his father's village before he died. Dembo Konte was in search of his roots, of proof that he was descended from kings, and of the "deeper style" of the Mali kora.

The griots in principal can support themselves on the road with their artful praises. When they recognize a name, they recite the genealogy of its owner, linking his forbears with great episodes in Mandinka history, their voice rising to a pitch of laudatory passion. For this, payment must be made. You will see the often impecunious victim cowering at the griots' approach, fearing the pointed finger.

I was in search of the forgotten genius of a singer called Fanta Sacko whose haunting voice I had heard on her only record made in 1972. In the 1960s she had been at the height of her beauty and fame. Since then, something had happened, some mysterious misfortune, and she had by all accounts become a recluse.

The fourth part of our troupe was Lucy Duran, a woman famous among the griots for her grasp of the Mandinka language and for her expertise as a kora player—the only woman in the world to play the instrument. Now a curator of the National Sound Archive of the British Library, she was searching along the railway for a singer called Ousmane Sacko whose voice she had heard on French radio.

Unless you travel with a griot, you will not find the music, and without a quest you will have no purpose in the remote and extraordinary landscape of Senegal and Mali. Nor will you see behind the walls into the beautifully designed compounds with their thick cooling walls, and without the griots' eloquent speeches of announcement there is no ceremonial reception, killing of goats, or the fantastic dancing and chanting of the wives, and the journey may be lonely and difficult. Michel Leiris, the French Surrealist and anthropologist, crossing this landscape in 1931 and reporting on his journey in his classic *L'Afrique fantôme,* complained of frequent bouts of depression, or *cafard à en pleurer.*

We prepared for our journey to Mali in Dembo Konte's compound near the Gambian capital. We were blessed by a gold-toothed marabout (priest) who arrived smelling of lavender and pomade; there were prayers and songs of Mali. Dembo Konte paid a visit to a crocodile shrine, a small pool covered in dense vegetation where a collection of small white crocodiles has lived for generations miles away from any river. These beasts of magic, who lay asleep on the far bank while Dembo Konte drank the water of the stagnant pool from a rusty enamel cup, were said to have been transformed from a beautiful goddess who was unable to hide her beauty in any other way. The saddest, most moving song in Dembo Konte's repertoire is a lament for Alhaji "Bamba" Bejang, a slave trader and a generous musical patron whose praise name, Bamba (meaning crocodile), came from his love of feeding these reptiles in the Gambia River:

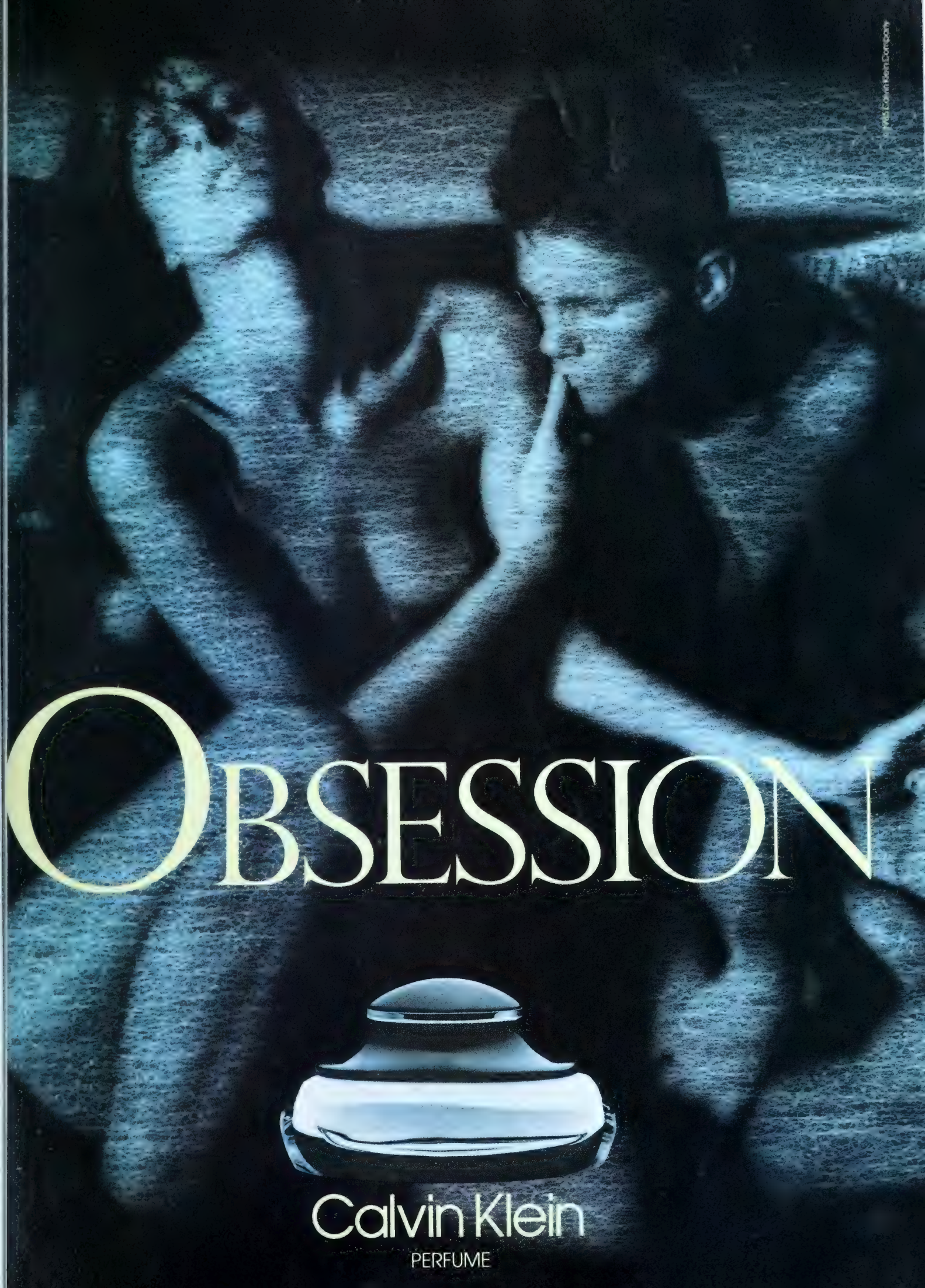
Let us cry for the crocodile and
weep for the crocodile
The crocodile of Samakunda
The crocodile ruler is in heaven
The world has no end.

We set out and traveled north for 200 miles by Toyota covered wagon to reach the railway line, crossing the savanna at the hottest time of year before the rains, when the jinns are considered to be at their most unpredictable. Amadu Jobarteh and Dembo Konte, however, had brought ample protection, with amulets and gris-gris, some of which "talked in your pocket," others that, it was said, could under certain circumstances cause death.

Much of the landscape was parkland of dry scorched grass with silk cotton, flame, and mahogany trees or huge expanses of baobab trees with their monstrous elephant-skin trunks and petrified branches. Each tree has spaced itself equally from the next to share water, their primeval forms stretching across the flat plain to the horizon like a procession of terror-struck chessmen.

Then at Tambacunda, our connection with the railway, we caught the true train of hell. Senegal and Mali both run their trains on the same line, but nobody in their right mind takes the Mali train, except the hardened *commerçants,* who have to, or the odd travelers like ourselves. At midnight in the soda gloom of a single station light we saw some battered war-torn rolling stock sliding into the platform. As the blacked-out carriages came abreast, the passengers appeared to be strangling each other, fighting for air and space. There was a surge of boarding passengers, and then the station was filled with clouds of pepper, thrown by thieves to choke and divert their frenzied victims. We knew it was a three-day wait for the Senegal train. The Mali train had three carriages for a crowd that would easily have filled eight.

There was no turning back, so we charged the carriage in a spirit of brutality that we shared with our fellow passengers for the next thirteen hours. Instead of putting on more carriages, the company had issued the guards


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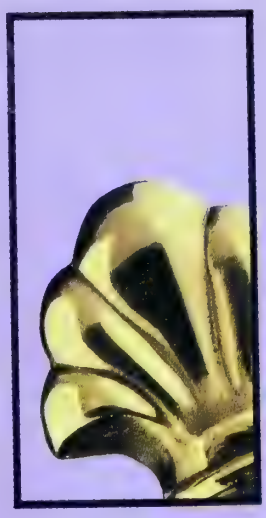
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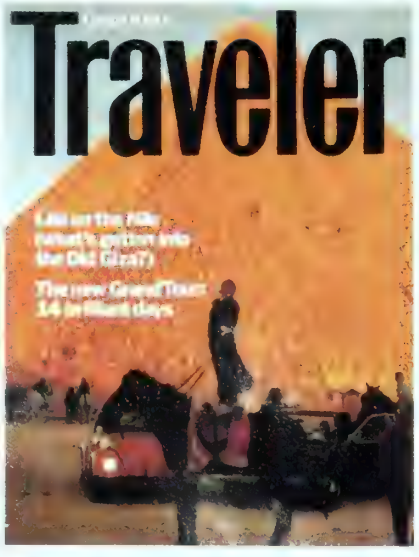
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with identical pairs of new track shoes so they could walk over us, back and forth, on inexplicable journeys. Each time they came, to protect ourselves we wearily pointed out the secret footholds hidden among us. We punched and climbed our way along the solidly blocked central aisle and came to a halt at a wall of rice sacks and polystyrene containers of stinking river fish guarded by two Wolof women glowering with anger, gaudily overpainted, smelling of a sweet sickly scent, shrieking in French. Most of the time they lay flat out, luxuriously but warily barricaded into a pen they had built out of stripped-away seat backs seized at Dakar, hogging it, endlessly eating and drinking, like the Three Fat Women from Antibes. "Look at those rascals," croaked Dembo, a word sadly lapsed in Europe. "Useless train," Amadu pronounced, shaking his head. "Useless."

At Kayes, near the Senegal border, we tumbled out of the Mali train, a ragged shell-shocked group. Dembo picked the one taxi driver in town whose father was a patron of Ousmane Sacko. In the white incapacitating heat we drove down dusty unmarked streets lined with the architecture of the Sahel, beautifully shaped mud houses with cool interior courtyards and thick rounded walls, a kind of gingerbread Romanesque.

In one of these houses Ousmane Sacko welcomed us with the assiduousness and openness that is part of this culture. A small neat man, he listened over the bleating of his sheep while Amadu presented Lucy's curriculum vitae. Then he spoke French in a formal declamatory style as if teaching primary-level lycée, fitting perhaps for his role as *fonctionnaire* and Morse code operator at the central telegraph office. After a nap from which I was awoken by a chicken trapped in my room, we boarded Ousmane's Mercedes for a formal tour, as if we were a trade delegation. From the electricity station on a bank above the depleted Senegal River, where we met the entire staff and reviewed the dials and pumps, we went to the telegraph office. There Ousmane introduced us to his boss, responsible for the *fusion* of his life as musician-*fonctionnaire* by giving him time off. Then on to the Hôtel du Rail, colonial style turned to third world with its cavernous and empty lobby inside and outside the ragged topiary and dried-up fountain of the old garden terrace that must once have seen white-jacketed waiters serving the French just back from faraway stations along the line. Our waiter wore a designer T-shirt, called himself Hélène, spoke Mandinka and very camp French with his hand on his hip. Dembo Konte was shocked. He described him as a man-woman and said he was turning God's work around. That night Ousmane Sacko killed a sheep for us and cooked it with tinned petits pois and with his two wives sang many songs in homage to Lucy Duran.

The Senegalese train to Bamako, in surreal contrast to the Mali train, had reserved seats and a bar that served cold beer. There were politicians on their way to the capital reading *Le*

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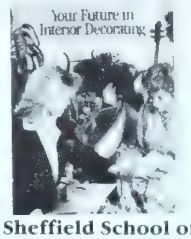
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Monde. As we crossed into Mali, the terrain changed: a vast landscape of eroded rock in isolated tables of Colorado proportions set in green vegetation, silvery rivers curling about them, an African Xanadu blasted by the sun.

Amadu went to the train window and peered through the shimmering waves of heat at an infinite plain of baobabs. He turned to me and said, "I

> It was a vast landscape of eroded rock, an African Xanadu blasted by the sun

am *very* sorry." There were tears in his eyes, and he shook his head. "He says he is sad," said Dembo. "The baobab trees are the spirit of the ancestors. They remind Amadu of his father. He says that now, for the first time, we are in the East." In Mali everything is connected to the landscape: the music, the history, and even the language. Mandinka is described in the old songs as the "clear voice of the savanna" and Mali as the Bright Country, to contrast its open savanna with the dark forest of Guinea in the west, the "land of the cola."

Late one afternoon while Amadu and Dembo were sequestered in the compound of Sidiki Jobarteh, Amadu's cousin and the "King of the Kora," we followed a maze of uneven dirt roads through the baking concrete suburbs of Bamako and stopped outside a small metal door that led up a steep flight of steps in a mud wall. It was opened by a young girl who said that her mother, Fanta Sacko, was inside and we could come in. She showed us into an astonishing room, bursting with high-kitsch objects in rows, on sideboards, in cabinets, on every available surface except the chairs. It was like the den of some hoarding witch with a passion for funfair prizes. Five identical toucans sat on five upturned cups and saucers next to a row of gnomes with snowstorm globes for bellies. On the table were three large ashtrays in the form of giant toads and a large bowl of plastic flowers welded


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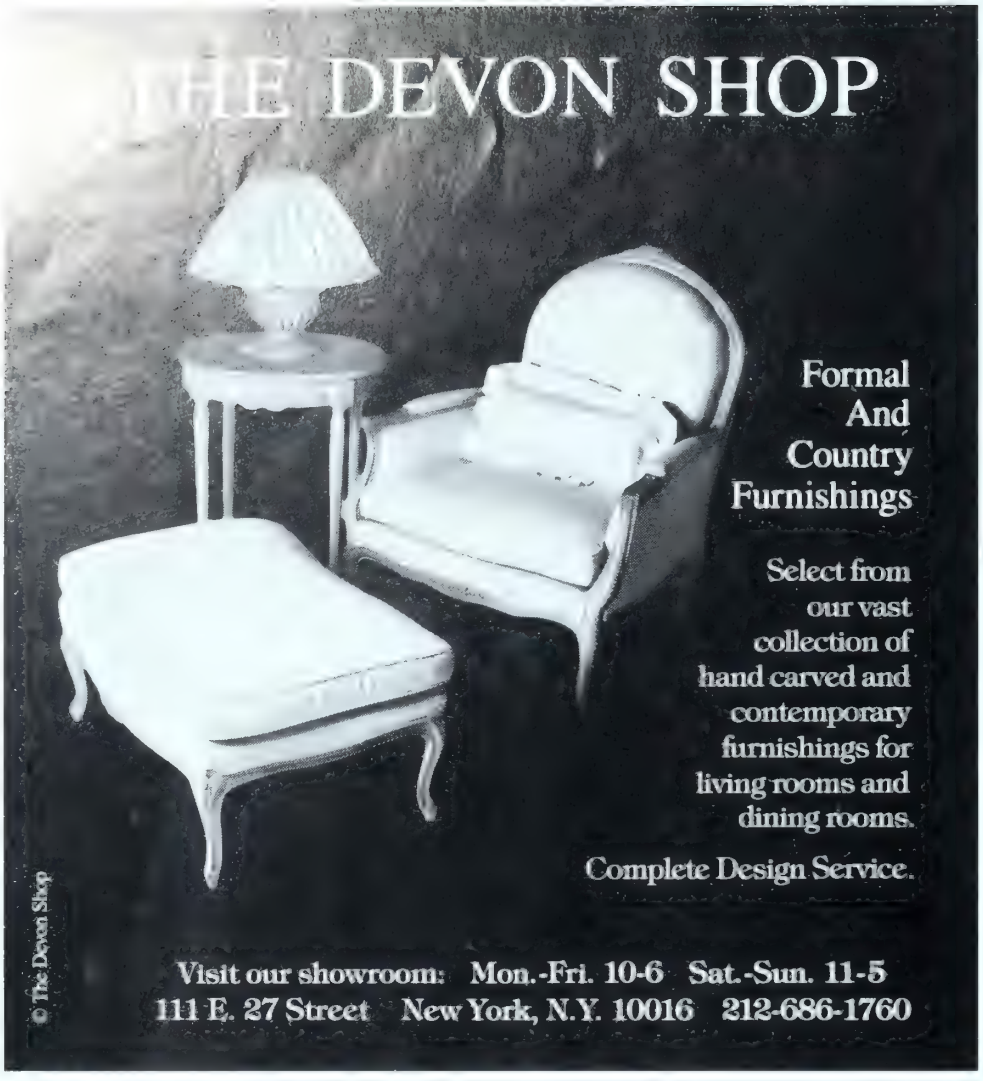
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to a vase which weighed, disconcertingly, less than a paperback book. The walls were covered with many photographs of Fanta Sacko as a young singer and star. The effect was one of staggering unreality. A woman appeared, I judged about 45, thin with very black skin, her face wrapped carefully in a burnous of vivid black and white. She was enervated, smiling, and touched her face constantly. She seemed, then, almost overcome to see us and left the room. Later she said she had gone away to cry, remembering other white friends she hadn't seen for years. She reappeared in a midnight-blue gown and headdress and launched at great volume into the powerful Mali chant of greeting called "Calling the Horses." Her voice was still intact and beautiful.

She had been unable to work, she said, or even leave her house for some years because of her "illness." Perhaps if she could get to Europe she could be cured. Indeed it emerged—she revealed—that the skin of her face had been destroyed by hessal, the mercury-based skin-lightening substance she had used in her heyday which destroys tissue permanently. Hessal comes from a Wolof word meaning light-skinned and is legally manufactured and widely used, despite its known effects. Light skin is still perceived as a mark of distinction south of the Sahara.

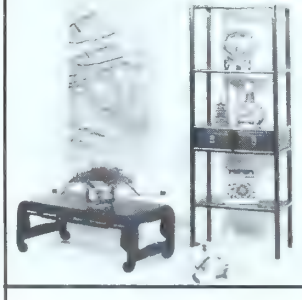
She sang most of her repertoire like a young girl giving an audition. Between the vocal lines, she imitated the instruments of her departed accompanists. She told me the sense of clarity in the music of Mali came from a childhood sense of genealogical certainty on one hand, Islamic predestiny on the other. "Guinea is eloquence," she said, "but Mali is authenticity." We left her standing in her doorway waving and "Calling the Horses."

Lucy Duran and I, waiting to fly to Dakar, spent our evenings in Bamako at the Buffet de la Gare, the center of all activity, where we found ourselves, as ever, the guests of the Mali railway company. By a typical and imaginative African irony the best new electric band in West Africa, the Super Rail Band, is owned and managed by Mali Railways—the worst railway managers in the world with the best taste in music. So they can be forgiven. Even so, take the Senegal train, the "Smoke of the Savanna." □





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AMERICAN GRANDEUR



Moving his Georgia mansion was the first step. Restoring it to pristine condition the second. Then historian William Nathaniel Banks filled his house with an exquisite collection of Federal and Empire antiques

BY BRENDAN GILL

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACQUES DIRAND

One of my favorite topics is the ease with which different cultures succeed in cross-fertilizing each other. Against what would appear to be high odds, a mingling of traditions often produces consequences as agreeable as they are astonishing. In music an excellent example of what I have in mind is *Madame Butterfly,* which began as a short story by a Philadelphia lawyer named John Luther Long and was turned into a hit show in New York and London by David Belasco, an impresario from San Francisco. Visiting London, Giacomo Puccini attended the show and on his return to Italy transformed it into one of the most successful of all operas. Long, Belasco, and Puccini had never visited Japan and knew next to nothing about its civilization, but among makers of works of art such trifles are quickly got past. Something new and wonderful had come into the world. That is what mattered then and that is what matters now, and it is all that matters.

In architecture I can think of few more delightful examples of cultural cross-fertilization than the country house in Coweta County, Georgia, belonging to the writer, historian, and collector William Nathaniel Banks. Here in a green fastness not far from—and yet infinitely removed from—the go-getting conurbation of Atlanta, on a gentle eminence that looks out over an expanse of lawn and gardens to a small and shapely

William Nathaniel Banks on the front portico of the Gordon–Banks house, now situated in Banks's native Coweta County. *Preceding pages:* The spiral staircase, like the rest of the house, has original faux-marble woodwork and gilded carving dating from 1828, when the house was built in Haddock, Georgia, by New Hampshire carpenter Daniel Pratt. A peacock, one of four, on a porch railing.

lake, rises a white wooden house that seems to have strayed from a site some thousand miles to the north. To be sure, it has a pillared entrance façade, the pillars of a height and girth that bespeak the grand aspirations of the antebellum South, but something about the pitch of its roof, the disposition of its windows, and the air of reticence in which it wraps itself hints at a New England origin. Silently it suggests that it will prove a hospitable house but not one that throws itself open to strangers; although it was built in the early nineteenth century, it emanates an eighteenth-century Yankee reserve.

Strolling about on the mossy brick paths of what Andrew Jackson Downing would have called a handsome country seat, we feel stealing over us an uncanny sense of disorientation—one that simultaneously embraces past and present, North and South. Our robust and genial host welcomes us with a courtesy that seems not only his by nature but his by inheritance, handed down from generations of previous owners of the house. Despite his being so debonairly contemporary, we are tempted to wonder, when the appropriate moment comes, whether he will be offering us a glass of Madeira or a vodka martini. A peacock screams among the dogwoods, and its bad temper prompts us to perceive that we have not drifted back into a time that is lost—the real world (even if it happens to be a real world furnished with peacocks) lies all around us. With our host's help we learn that the enchanting crisscross of cultural motifs in which we find ourselves entangled is based not upon fantasy but upon the down-to-earth, hard-as-nails facts of American history.

In 1793, Eli Whitney invented a successful cotton gin ("gin" being short for engine) by means of which cotton seeds could be easily removed from cotton fibers. This invention led to a boom in cotton growing throughout the South and brought an unprecedented degree of prosperity to upper Georgia in the opening decades of the nineteenth century. A cotton-planting gentry grew up which could afford luxurious houses, and to serve them, builders and architects arrived from New York, New England, and even from far-off old England as well. Among them was a young Yankee carpenter named Daniel Pratt, God-fearing and hard-working and as eager as any hero out of the picaresque fictions of that day to make his way quickly upward from rags to riches. Having arrived in Savannah, Georgia, in 1819, he acquired considerable knowledge of the elegancies of building mansions in that fashionable city. A couple of years later he moved to Milledgeville, then the capital of the state, and established a reputation as an honest and skillful builder. Armed with Asher Benjamin's *American Builder's Companion* and other handbooks, he was able to perform with notable refinement the dual tasks of architect and builder. He brought to the burgeoning, aggressive South the disciplined correctness of the North, which had not yet lost its taste for austerity; a combining of the two cultures proved irresistible. Pratt constructed a number of splendid houses for cotton planters in and around Milledgeville. One of them, built in the late 1820s, was for the wealthy planter John W. Gordon, who owned a plantation near the ill-named hamlet of Haddock. A year or so later the ever-ambitious Pratt abandoned building and architecture in favor of manufacturing cotton gins, and by the time of his death, in 1873, he was known as the leading industrialist in Alabama.

William Banks first visited the Gordon house in Haddock in 1958. Surrounded by an almost impenetrable scrub growth, the house had neither plumbing nor electricity and had been empty and in derelict condition for many years. Its exquisite interior had been spared the usual vandalism, thanks partly to a neighborhood tradition that two terrifying ghosts in red bandannas patrolled the premises night and day. A few years later, Banks fell in love with and decided to purchase a certain foursquare eighteenth-century house in Temple, New Hampshire (a house of which there will be more to say in the next issue of House & Garden). As dedicated historians will, Banks set about boning up on the early days of his adopted village and discovered that the designer and builder of the ravishing Gordon house he had visited in Haddock, Georgia, was a native son of Temple, New Hampshire. This coincidence amounted to an imperative to Banks—who would dare defy the gods by ignoring it? In 1968, with the encouragement of his recently widowed mother and under the supervision of architect Robert L. Raley, Banks proceeded to acquire the Gordon house, cut it into sections, move it by truck a hundred miles north to Coweta County, and reerect it on the site of a house his parents had built many years earlier in the then-popular Tudor style. The removal of the Tudor house made it possible to place the newly restored Gordon house in the very heart of the gardens that his parents had begun to lay out in 1929 according to the designs of the landscape architect William C. Pauley. Today the Gordon–Banks house looks as firmly rooted as the great trees that shade it. Henry James once said that, everything else being equal, a building that sits is more pleasing than a building that stands: the Banks house sits in beauty upon its modest height looking out over a seemingly unlimited landscape of lawn, garden, water, and forest.

Our host has reason to be proud of his accomplishments, within-doors and without. From the moment that Banks shouldered the heavy responsibility of moving and restoring the house, he perceived that he would have to shoulder the no less heavy responsibility of furnishing it in a style worthy of its origins. "Even totally empty the house has a very strong personality," Banks says. "It was obvious that it should contain fine things, but not an overabundance of them. Whenever somebody hints that the house strikes him as sparsely furnished, I take that as a compliment." Limiting himself largely to the Federal and Empire periods, Banks's inspiration for furnishing the house was a card table that had belonged to a Charleston cousin: having as its central support a winged and gilded caryatid, the circa-1815 table is attributed to Charles Honoré Lannuier in New York City. A sofa of *(Text continued on page 202)*



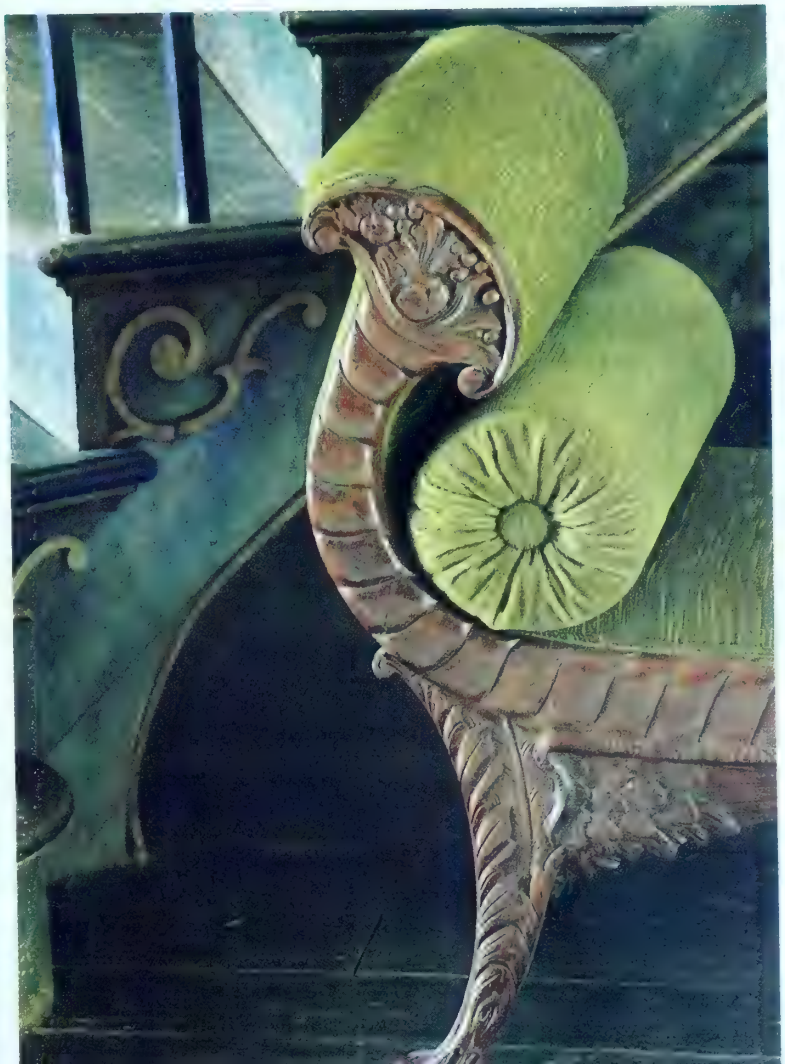


In the upstairs hall a pedestal table by Philadelphia cabinetmaker Antoine Gabriel Quervelle and a pair of early-19th-century settees attributed to Quervelle echo the curves of the staircase. Striped silk on settees is from Brunschwig.









Rising above a maze of boxwood, the graceful Regency-style gazebo, *above,* was designed by architect Robert L. Raley, who also supervised the removal of the house from its original site one hundred miles away. *Right:* A fine New York couch, c. 1815, with gilded paw feet. *Opposite above:* In the library over the bookcase hangs an Albert Bierstadt landscape of the White Mountains, New Hampshire, and on either side McKenney & Hall lithographs, c. 1836. Globe is American, c. 1850. *Left:* A three-tier fountain of Carrara marble, c. 1840, punctuates a sweep of formal garden.





The drawing room has furniture of exceptional quality from Banks's collection, including, at far right, a card table with gilded caryatid support attributed to Charles Honoré Lannuier which inspired Banks to undertake the restoration of the house. Late-18th-century French busts in niches are of Marie Antoinette and the dramatist Buirette de Belloy. *Overleaf:* Italian Baroque stone sculptures representing the four seasons in the garden beyond a massive white oak.







IN THE LIGHT OF THE BAY

The Wilsey house in San Francisco was a spirited collaboration between the owners and interior designer Michael Taylor

BY LINDA H. BUCKLIN
PHOTOGRAPHS BY OBERTO GILI

In the living room a painting by Theodore Earl Butler, c. 1900, hangs over a Michael Taylor sofa covered with embossed silk velvet from Clarence House. Silk taffeta on pillow from Scalamandré.



When Dede Wilsey, wife of San Francisco businessman and real-estate developer Alfred S. Wilsey, talks about her San Francisco house, it becomes readily apparent that her life revolves around it. She is the mother of two teenage sons, serves on the board of several San Francisco institutions, travels widely with her husband, owns a vineyard, and entertains frequently. At the center of all this activity is the Wilseys' house on Jackson Street overlooking the bay.

As the daughter of the late Wiley Buchanan, who was chief of protocol under Dwight Eisenhower and twice an ambassador (once to Luxembourg and once to Austria), she lived in several formal houses throughout Europe and in Washington, D.C., and Newport. Yet this San Francisco house was the first to capture her heart. "I have a tremendous nesting instinct," admits the vivacious Mrs. Wilsey. "When I first saw this house, which at the time was owned by the Spellman Prentices, I knew immediately it was the house I'd always wanted to own."

The house was built about 1910 and then remodeled in the 1950s by William Wurster of Wurster, Bernardi & Emmons. When the Wilseys bought it in 1981, they hired California interior designer Michael Taylor to help with their extensive redecorations. Eventually they added on a glassed-in garden room, which was one of the last projects Taylor worked on before his death in 1986. Dede laughs as she recalls her first meeting with Taylor. "When I first asked Michael to do this house, I said, 'Michael, I want you, but there's one thing I want you to know— I don't want a typical Michael Taylor house.' And Michael asked, 'What exactly is that?' I said 'Oh, you know, white on white, wicker everywhere, huge overstuffed chairs. My feet don't reach the floor. I feel like a pygmy.' He thought that was funny, and from that time on we were great friends."

If the Michael Taylor look was not for Dede Wilsey, then what was? Color, she loves color. "I'm very affected by color. Specific colors. Everything in my house is green, yellow, and pink. I'm not a blue person. I think that's the province of people with blue eyes, and besides I have an older sister who was always dressed in pale blue. When I came along, my mother needed an alter-

Dede Wilsey, *above,* brought her own love of color—particularly greens, yellows, and pinks—to the decoration of the house. *Opposite:* In the living room a pair of 18th-century Russian girandoles stand on the mantel before a Louis XVI wood and gold-filigree trumeau, which Mrs. Wilsey found in France.





On one side the living room opens onto a small front garden. The 18th-century Aubusson rug came from Peru, the Louis XVI chairs from Michael Taylor. Curved sofa, covered in a Brunschwig velvet, is by Taylor after a Syrie Maugham design. Silk taffeta for curtains from Scalamandré.





The dramatic garden room has a sweeping view of San Francisco Bay and the Marin hills and a skylight that opens to the stars. All furniture is of Michael Taylor design; white fabric is basketweave chenille from Robert Crowder. *Opposite:* Table in garden room set with Baccarat crystal, Flora Danica plates.





nate color, so she chose pink. I grew up loving pink."

Dede remembers one amusing moment in the creative process when she and Michael were choosing fabrics for the living room. "When we first started together, I had definite ideas of fabrics I wanted. Take the Scalamandré silk taffeta for the living-room curtains: I said, 'Just think, Michael, if I were Scarlett O'Hara, wouldn't I just love to have a dress of that material?' Michael said, 'No, no, no! It's all wrong. I don't like it.' Then six months later he came over one day and said, 'Dede, I have the most incredible fabric for the living room. You'll love it.' It was that exact same fabric."

Over the years of working together Dede and Michael developed a unique friendship. "I have great respect for Michael. He was a genius," she says softly. Yet despite this genius, he never succeeded in intimidating her. "We were a partnership," she explains. "I don't think there's anything in the house that we didn't discuss. I valued Michael's opinion, yet he didn't overwhelm me."

The single most important lesson Dede maintains she learned from Michael Taylor was to wait until she could find exactly what she was looking for. "He wouldn't let me buy something just for the sake of filling an empty space. I learned that an empty space is OK."

Throughout her years of worldwide travel and collecting antiques and objets d'art, Dede Wilsey has been successful in finding exactly what she wants. In Peru she bought a large eighteenth-century Aubusson rug, the focal point of the formal light-filled living room. In France she found the Louis XVI wood and gold-filigree trumeau to go with the mantel of the same period. Standing on the mantel are a pair of eighteenth-century Russian girandoles of bronze-doré, malachite, and crystal that were a gift from her husband. There's also an eighteenth-century gilt side table from Venice. The whimsical stone elephant tables at either end of the room were Michael Taylor's suggestion, because, he said, the room was getting a "little too serious."

From the living room a few steps lead down to the newly completed garden *(Text continued on page 224)*

Over the hand-painted Austrian chair in the master bedroom, *opposite,* is a late-19th-century seascape by Gustave Loiseau. Cotton for curtains and bed canopy from Brunschwig. *Above:* An 18th-century Waterford chandelier hangs in the dining room; beyond is the front hall with painting by Carlos Loarca.



FABULOUS FAKERY

How decorator-painter Richard Lowell Neas brought the aura of the French provinces to his Long Island cottage

BY ELAINE GREENE

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JACQUES DIRAND

Visitors sense the ocean when they come within half a mile of Richard Lowell Neas's weekend house on eastern Long Island. Suddenly the air freshens, the rumble of the surf begins to sound, and privet, rugosa, and beach plum take over the landscape. There is an elemental excitement here that never palls, and it was this that drew Neas, an interior designer and decorative painter, away from a Bucks County place he had owned.

Twelve years ago the designer bought a 1930s summer cottage that stands high on a bluff overlooking the Atlantic. The wide swath of scrub between the cottage and the sea is a bird sanctuary, and only one other building can be seen in that direction. Yet instead of the sun-

Tall doors, *opposite,* open the summer room to a sheltered balcony where herbs grow in baskets and tubs. *Left:* A detail of one of the summer room doors. The trompe l'oeil was inspired by decoration on a 17th-century faience tureen in Richard Neas's fine collection.







A gilded papier-mâché dog, *opposite,* waits inside the front entrance from which is seen the dining room hung in Brunschwig plaid. *Above:* The living room, on the other side of the entrance, was originally two smaller spaces. Neas designed and painted the fireplace and comb-finish floor. Unusual wing chair is, like much of the furniture, 18th-century French; so is the original of the Brunschwig linen print.

baked, windswept, stripped-down beach house you might expect in such a location, Neas has created its antithesis. The moment you drive through the gateposts hung over with dense tree limbs and vines to arrive in a sunny sheltered garden, you are given a pulse-quickening promise of visual luxury that all the rooms fulfill. Richard Neas, who lived with a very English look in Bucks County, decided to capture the herb-scented, stone-paved, rustic-but-formal spirit of the French countryside in this house.

He achieved his goal through an extensive year-long remodeling (which he still remembers "with horror"), the acquisition of a good deal of first-rate French antique furniture and reproduction fabrics, and the generous use of the virtuoso trompe l'oeil he is famous for.

Neas describes the remodeling of the first year as "an opening up." Fewer, larger rooms resulted, with big custom-made French doors replacing small original windows and a narrow front door. Some major structural elements were rebuilt—every upstairs interior wall, for example—and all the surfaces were renewed. Still the designer was not satisfied; the ceilings were irrevocably low and the openness to the daylight remained limited. He explains, "The original cottage,





The summer room welcomes any size and type of gathering, from early brunch to midnight port and conversation. Among the trompe l'oeil achievements of painter Neas: mantelpiece, floor, chandelier, trim. Stucco wall is sponge-glazed.





On the big round table in the summer room, *opposite,* rests a metal ball on which Richard Neas painted a sampler of trompe l'oeil finishes. *Above:* The front porch faces the ocean to the south but is so protected by shrubs and hedges that it and the garden around it function as an oasis when the sun begins to glare or the onshore wind picks up.

with the heating system I installed, is a fall and winter pleasure—a perfect place for Christmas—but I wanted a cool overscaled summer room."

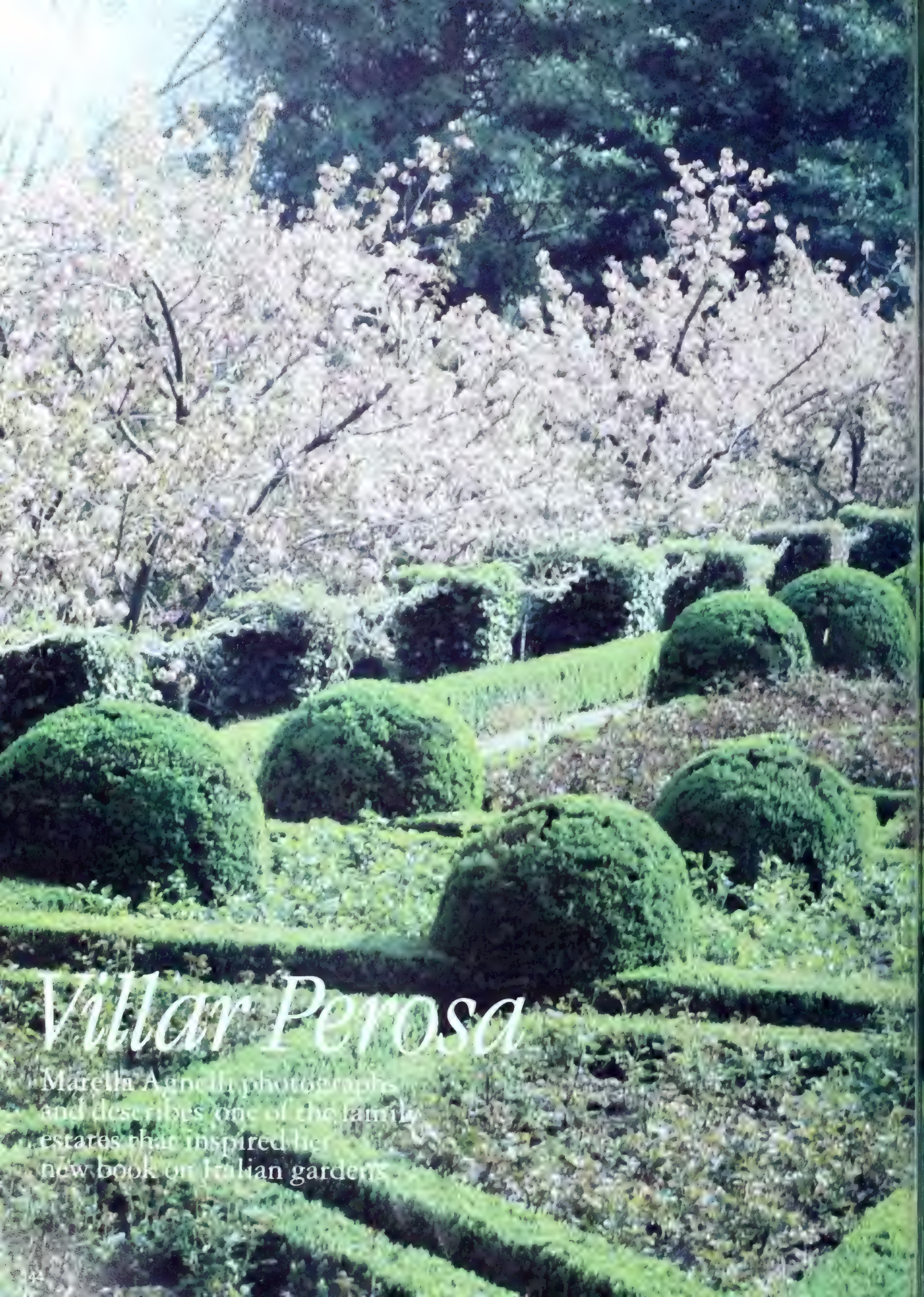
Five years after the first remodeling Neas attached such a room—30 feet square and 22 feet high at the top beam—to the back of the house, opening off the kitchen. Neas says fondly of the room, "The whole thing is a fake," referring to the plywood floor that he painted to resemble stone slabs so perfectly that people feel it with their fingers, the wood mantelpiece changed by his brush into Caen stone, the wood chandelier into faience, the door and window frames into blue-and-white tiles. The artist admits he has never seen ceramic interior trim but remembers reading of a *pavillon de porcelaine* at Versailles in which a similar trompe l'oeil was performed.

While Richard Neas likes to fool the eye, he doesn't trifle with the other senses. He skillfully cooks his favorite French bourgeois food (onion tart, Long Island–adapted bouillabaisse, *lapin à la moutarde*) and serves his favorite French wines (Ladoucette, Château de Beychevelle). He opens his windows to the fragrance of the white wisteria and peonies he has planted. He fills his rooms with music through a carefully engineered sound system. *La joie de vivre* is simply, Gallically, part of the housekeeping. □

Editor: Babs Simpson



Richard Neas's cooking is honest but his kitchen, *above,* is an eye-fooler with a door painted as a cupboard and refrigerator doors imitating rough-sawn boards. *Opposite above:* The master bedroom's strié-papered walls are decorated with bamboo cut from another paper. Open door leads to bathroom. Chintz by Colefax & Fowler. *Opposite below:* Neas copied balusters from 17th-century French originals.



Villar Perosa

Mareth Agnelli photographs and describes one of the family estates that inspired her new book on Italian gardens.





On one of the old terraces, *preceding pages* and *opposite*, with its classic boxwood geometry, polyantha roses are grown for cutting. Tops of cherry trees from the allée below form a border; Diana the huntress is 18th-century Piedmontese. *Above:* Yew pyramid contrasts handsomely with green firs and pinky 'Tricolor' beeches.

Certain people may seem *simpatiche* to us, others not. And this may be the same with houses. We are taken by some and not by others. In the former, life seems to proceed in harmony, serenity, or at least this is the impression those houses give us. An illusion of happiness. Visiting or living in some of these places, I have often wondered if it was just an aesthetic question, a matter of proportions. But then I have been in beautiful buildings that were not *simpatiche*. Other houses, instead, even if very simple, gave me a yearning to stay there, to live there.

This indefinable *simpatia,* precisely because it was beyond definition and without tangible explanation, would make me wonder about times lost in happiness among those walls, of other lives spent in those rooms where—as if by a magic spell—they had left their memory.

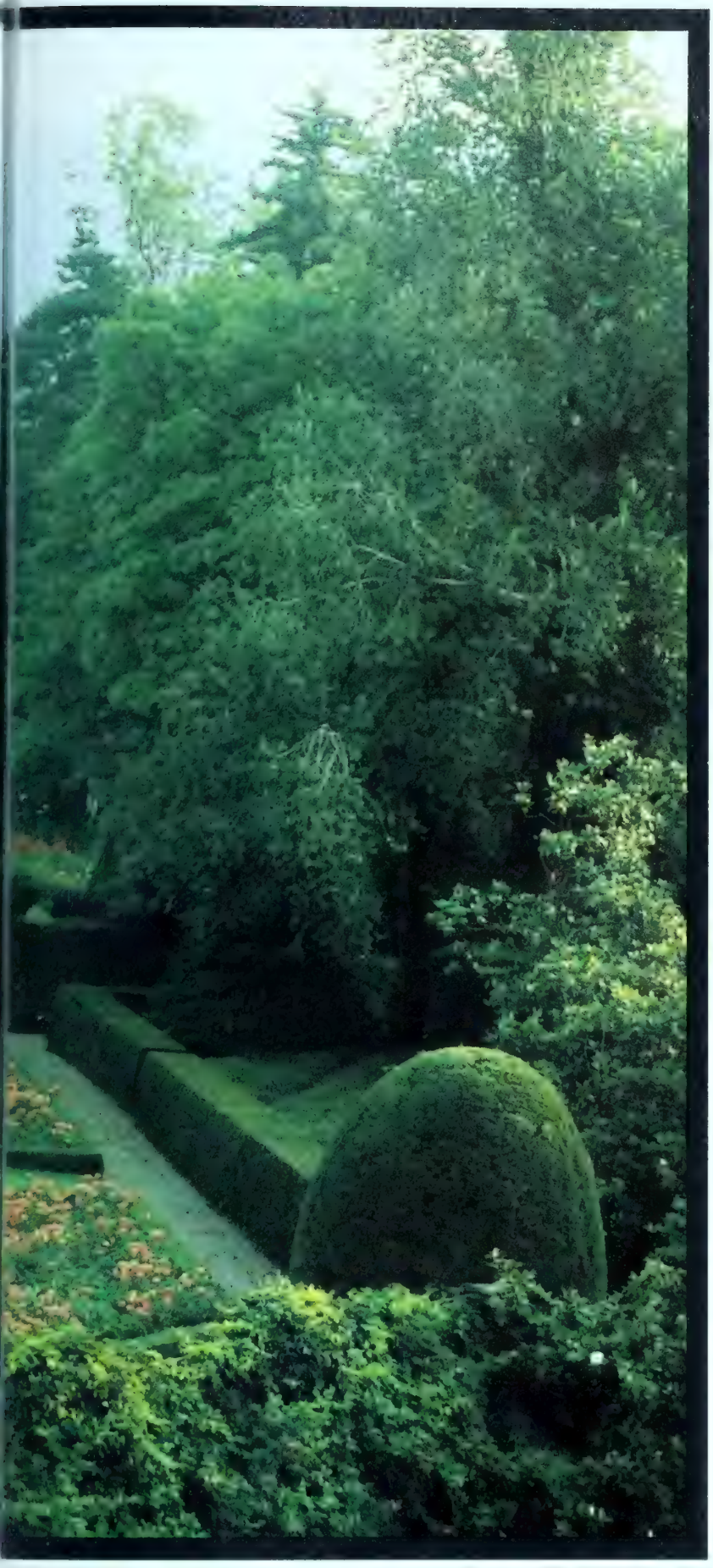
The first time I darkened its doorway, as the saying goes, many, many years ago, Villar Perosa caught me *per incantamento* in its spell. As I was feeling its magic for the first time, I had no idea that I was to live under that roof at length. But that first impression, that *simpatia,* has kept its promises over the years. Here I have spent beautiful times, serene times. And when that beauty and serenity seemed absent, I had only to stroll—or just linger—in the garden among the age-old trees, and I felt their consolation in any passing anxiety. It is a house that is loved not only by us but also by our children, and now it welcomes our grandchildren during their vacations.

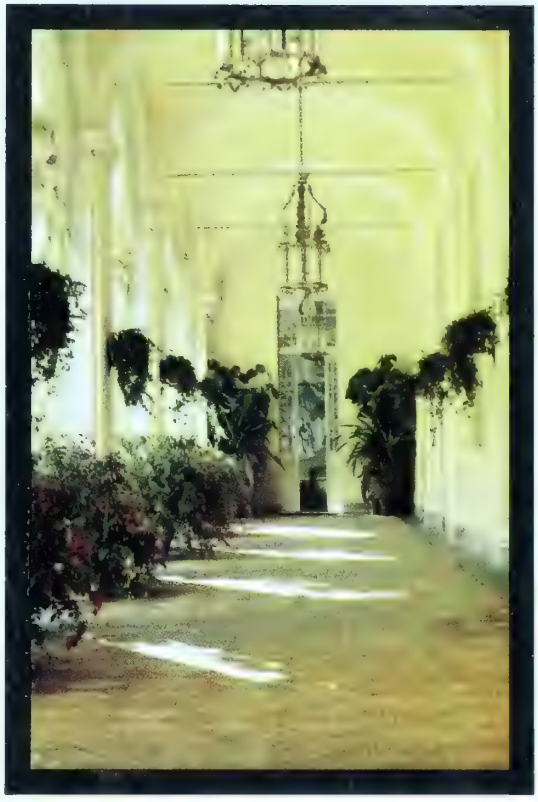


The first time I saw it, Villar Perosa
caught me per incantamento *in its spell. Here*
I have spent beautiful, serene times



A big *Magnolia grandiflora,* blue hibiscus, and the rose 'Zambra' on a terrace, *above,* added in the 19th century. *Opposite:* Hanging ivy, a collection of fuchsias in the summer loggia.



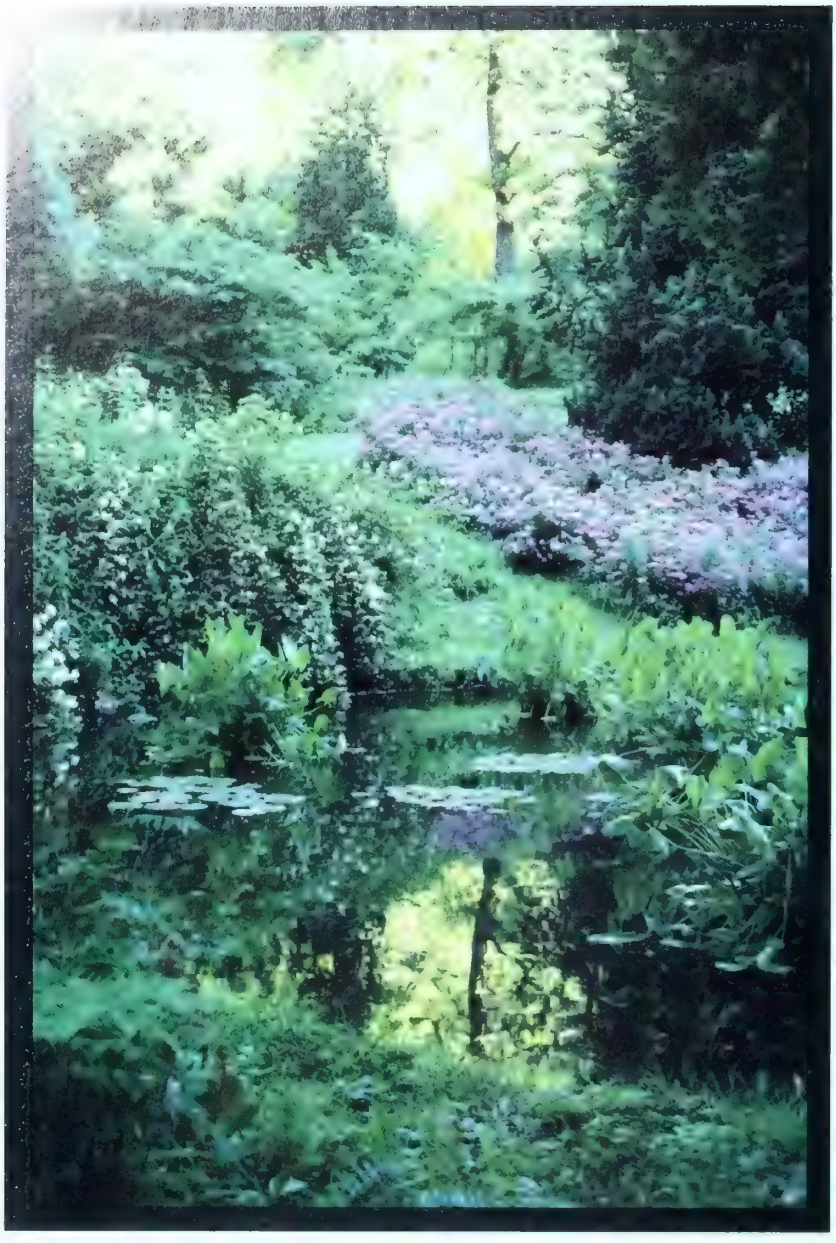


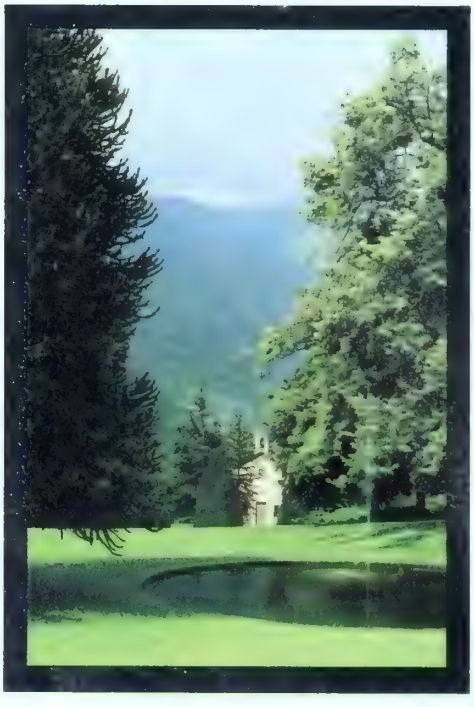
In the summer loggia I have listened to the frogs croaking and followed the flicker of the last fireflies



A band of *Iris pumila* grows alongside one of the ponds designed by Russell Page with 'Red Sentinel' apple trees in the background.





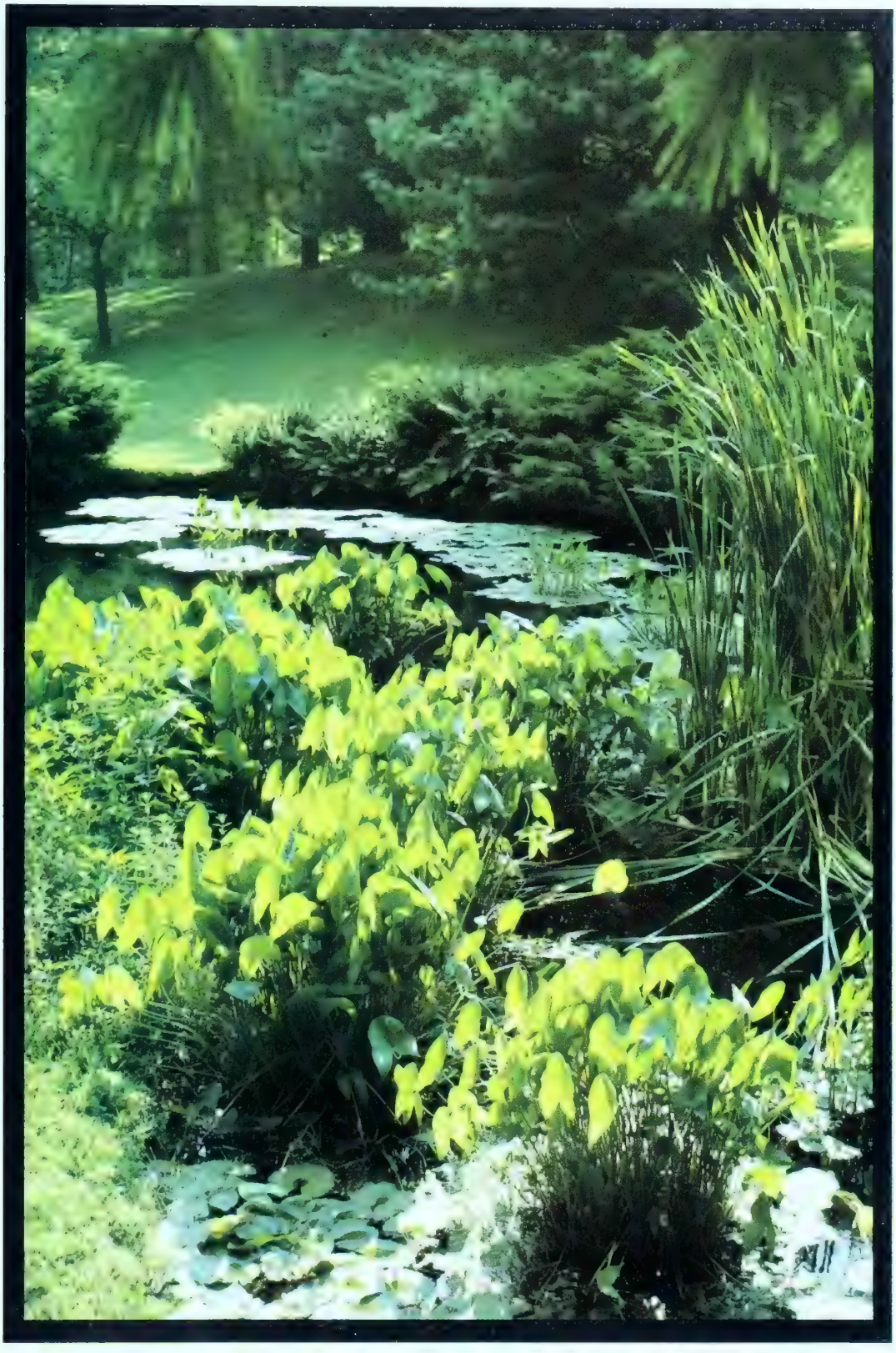


If you take the Sestriere road from Turin, shortly before you reach Pinerolo, the mountains—white both in summer and winter—seem to loom over you. As you drive on through the old town of Pinerolo (for many decades a garrison town, because the French border is near), you turn into a narrow steep valley called the Val Chisone, after the stream that runs through it. The road curves among leaden precipices until it suddenly comes into a wider open space surrounded by the high mountains. This is a plateau with two or three villages. The first of these is Villar Perosa. Apparently in the French-influenced local speech it means *Villar pietrosa,* or *pierreuse,* stony. The higher locality is Perosa Argentina, or silver stones. Here the earth is dark and the stones—romantically called silver—are even darker, grayer than the soil.

If you continue among other steep bends—also gray, in contrast with the green of the larches, firs, and pines—you come to the fortress of Assietta. More than a fortress this is really a kind of seventeenth-century Maginot Line—a series of fortifications that, from the mountain peaks, exploits the Alpine drops and seals off the pass down to the bed of the valley. When put to the test, these fortifications proved invaluable as protection against the French—for Turin and the rich plains of the Po. In the valley we are 2,462 meters above sea level; at the head of the Assietta the altitude is almost 3,000 meters.

I mention these fortifications because they might explain the building of the villa at Villar. Was it perhaps conceived for Vittorio Amedeo II as a more comfortable residence, more suited to the new period of peace, to house him during his inspection of the grim casemates of Fenestrelle or the garrisons *(Text continued on page 218)*

Arching branches of spirea touch the water, *above left,* in one of Page's pools. *Left:* The little 19th-century chapel framed between an araucaria and a lime tree. *Opposite:* Floating between clumps of *Pontederia cordata* and *Typha latifolia* at the edge of a pool, *Nymphaea rustica* planted in large sunken pots.

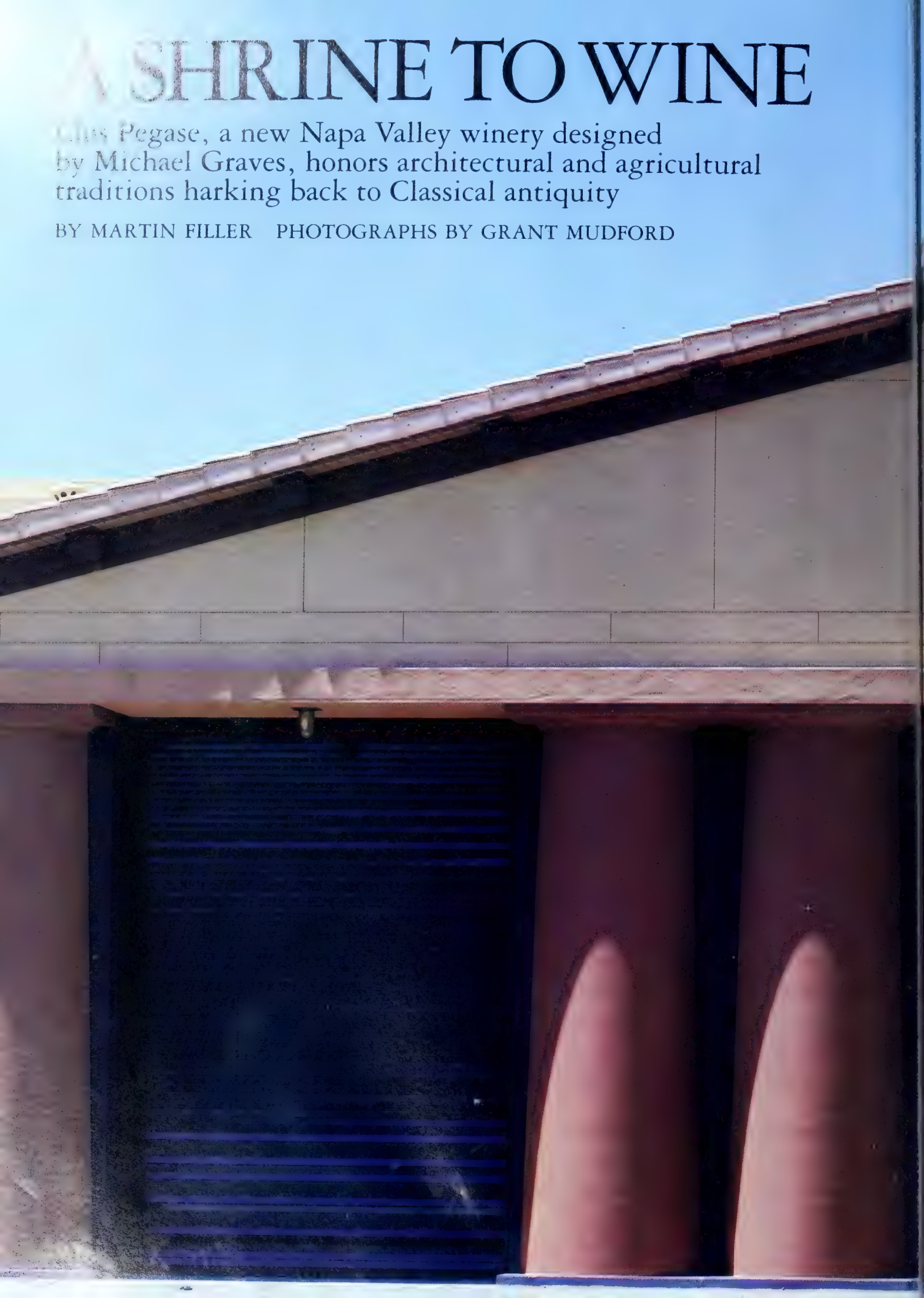


I was fascinated by Russell Page—the way he thought, the skill and passion with which he developed "our" new plan

A SHRINE TO WINE

Clos Pegase, a new Napa Valley winery designed by Michael Graves, honors architectural and agricultural traditions harking back to Classical antiquity

BY MARTIN FILLER PHOTOGRAPHS BY GRANT MUDFORD







Visitors to the Clos Pegase winery enter the atrium at the center of the south façade, *above,* for tours and tastings. *Opposite:* Details reveal influences from ancient Rome to Art Deco, but their fusion makes them unmistakably Graves. *Preceding pages:* The monumental colonnade and overscaled pediment of the east façade recall the geometric grandeur of Claude Nicolas Ledoux's royal saltworks of 1773–79 at Chaux, France.

A proud heritage is regenerated through a multitude of evocative details

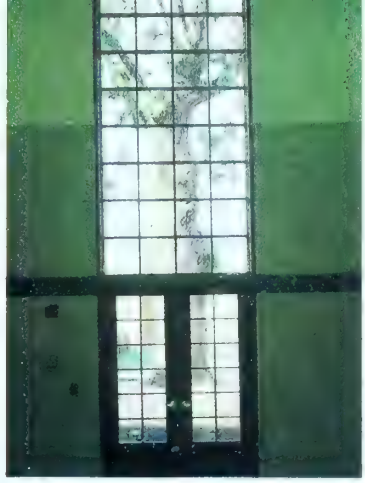
Classical architecture was the first International Style, spreading from the Mediterranean to the farthest corners of the Western world. For the past 2,500 years, Classicism and all its successive permutations—Renaissance, Palladianism, Neoclassicism, Romantic Classicism, Beaux-Arts Classicism, and, most recently, Postmodern Classicism—have been considered appropriate in virtually every setting and for almost any purpose. In America it has remained an indelible heritage ever since it was confirmed by the Founding Fathers as the architectural image best suited to the young republic. But the universal excellence achieved by our masons and carpenter-architects during the Greek Revival period has long been a thing of the past. A drive down the boulevards of Houston or Nashville, today rife with the clunky colonnades and misproportioned porticoes of Contractor Classicism, demonstrates how devalued the ancient ideal can become.

For the past decade Michael Graves has been trying valiantly to make the Classical tradition relevant in this country once again, while at the same time attempting to avoid the deadening routine of strict archaeology. The response to Graves's radical realignment of architectural values after his abrupt shift away from his initial Modernist manner has varied notably with each project. Often, it would seem, his success has been in inverse proportion to the size of the building. For example, heated controversy has surrounded such large Graves works as his Portland Building of 1980–82 in Oregon and the Whitney Museum schemes of 1985 and 1987 for New York, but such small structures as his San Juan Capistrano Library of 1980–83 in California have been warmly praised. Yet even some of Graves's modestly scaled designs can seem somewhat silly by imposing grandiose Classical motifs on mundane functions or unprepossessing locales. The Environmental Education Center of 1980–83, for instance, with its gilded capitals and pastel pergolas, looks bizarrely misplaced in the New Jersey marshland across the Hudson River from the towers of Manhattan.

Finally Michael Graves has been given the perfect occasion to apply his hallmark mixture of Classical magnificence and the Italian rural vernacular to a place and a purpose closely related to the root sources of his style. The Clos Pegase winery in California's Napa Valley, open to the public for its first harvest season since the building's dedication in June, is the happy fruition of a cultivation process almost as involved as wine making itself. Jan Isaac Shrem, a Paris-based businessman and art collector with a house in San Francisco, decided when he turned fifty that he would move to the Napa Valley and take up viticulture in America's foremost wine-producing region. In 1984 he asked the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art to help him find an architect to design his dream project—a winery and an adjacent residence that would be, in Shrem's oft-repeated phrase, epoch making.

Under the astute supervision of Helene Fried, a cultural consultant with extensive contacts among architects and developers, the museum in the spring of 1984 announced the Clos Pegase Design Competition. (The name of the winery was suggested by an Odilon Redon painting of Pegasus owned by Shrem, a reproduction of which now adorns the vineyard's labels.) To distinguish the Clos Pegase contest from other architectural competitions, the museum specified that the architects collaborate with artists in the preparation of the proposals, in Fried's words, "to expand the boundaries of both professions and set a new standard for the inventive integration of fine art with *(Text continued on page 204)*



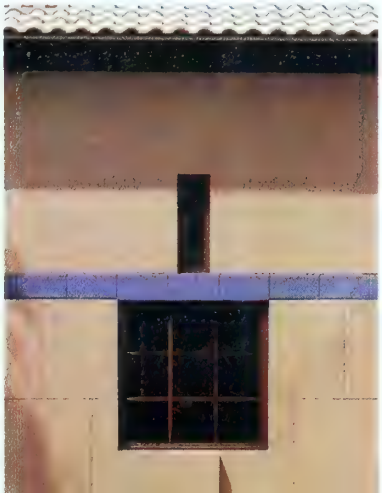










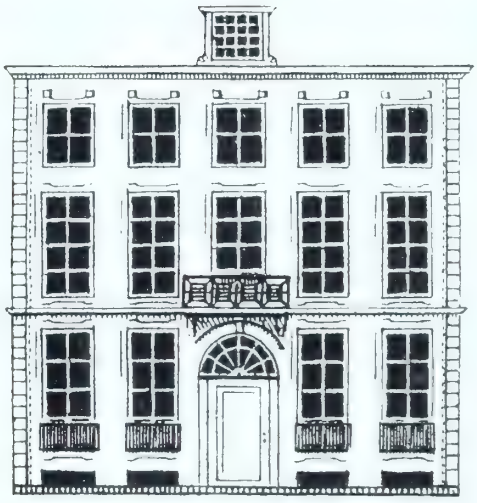





FOREVER ASHLEY

The family home of Bernard and Laura Ashley reveals a personal taste that millions have embraced

BY HUGH MONTGOMERY-MASSINGBERD
PHOTOGRAPHS BY FRANÇOIS HALARD



A view from the hallway of Laura Ashley's study, *right,* with busts of a young girl and the Duke of Wellington and a painting of the Prince of Wales. All fabrics in the house are from Laura Ashley, including Paisley on the chair and the curtains done in Grapes. *Above:* An engraving of the façade appears on the Ashley stationery.

"England," Napoleon Bonaparte is supposed to have observed in exile at St. Helena, "is a nation of shopkeepers." It is a nice irony that his ambassador's residence in Brussels at the time of the Battle of Waterloo should now happen to be the home of one of England's most celebrated shopkeepers, Sir Bernard Ashley, chairman of the Laura Ashley group whose fabrics empire stretches from Adelaide to Zürich, Atlanta to Tokyo.

I arrived from London to visit Sir Bernard (or BA as he prefers to be called), half-expecting to interview an aggressive accountant figure, who had masterminded the marketing of his wife's empire, against the setting of a superior showroom in the middle of a legendarily dreary city that serves as the center of Eurobureaucracy. I left feeling that I had been in the company of a remarkable man, deeply affected by the tragic death of his wife (Laura Ashley died in 1985 after a fall down some stairs in her eldest daughter's house in the Cotswolds) but fortified by a visionary Christian faith: firm, compassionate, straightforward, individualistic. Far from an anonymous showhouse, the interior had an intimately personal atmosphere reflecting calm, understated elegance. As for Brussels itself, a stroll around the streets with the casually dressed BA, taking in a couple of Laura Ashley shops on the way, soon opened my eyes to its surprising friendliness and architectural charm.







The grand salon, which runs the full length of the house, is divided into drawing and dining rooms. Table and chairs are covered in an early unnamed Laura Ashley fabric with floral garlands in lavender and primrose on a silver gray background; wallpaper and curtains are Yellow Moiré. Two 17th-century Flemish paintings on wood flank the fireplace in the drawing room.



In the guest bedroom, *above,* on the third floor the 19th-century English four-poster is covered in Maryton House; rose Ticking Stripe is on the sofa and armchair. *Opposite:* On the mantel, pieces inherited by Laura Ashley include beaded needlework and two lacquered-wood fans with mother-of-pearl inlay.

The Ashley residence on the rue Ducale, which is still something of an "embassy terrace," overlooks the agreeable park laid out in the 1770s by the Austrian court gardener Joachim Zinner. Although the park's avenues lead up to the royal palace, it is very much open to the public while it still preserves an art of seclusion.

The Belgians' admirable respect for privacy is illustrated by a story I was told in Brussels about King Albert (the present king's grandfather), who was to be seen in his off-duty moments walking by himself in these leafy environs informally attired in a tweed suit. "Look, quick!" exclaimed one American visitor excitedly to his Belgian companion. "Isn't that King Albert? Look!"

"It is King Albert," replied the Belgian. "That is why I am not looking."

A few years ago, when the Ashleys decided to make Brussels their center of operations and acquired the house on rue Ducale, the building was being used as an insurance office. A fairly simple late-eighteenth-century white stuccoed structure, it is five bays in width and three storys in height with a central attic window supported by elaborate volutes and a first-floor balcony above a fan-lighted archway leading to the courtyard. The architect is said to have been English, though the effect is certainly Continental.

The interior of the house encompasses the range of Laura Ashley designs; indeed all the fabrics in the house are from the widely available Laura Ashley stock. At once it pierced my old prejudices about pretty pastoral prints, smocks, and back-to-nature Romanticism.

The Laura Ashley story traditionally begins with the screen printing of Victorian-style tea towels on the kitchen table of the Ashleys' apartment in Pimlico, London, in Coronation Year 1953. What is often forgotten is that Bernard Ashley, besides being the driving force behind the development of the *(Text continued on page 216)*





Victorian furniture sets the mood in the master bathroom on the third floor where an old-fashioned stenciled tub sits on claw feet with gargoyle heads. A collection of gentleman's flasks and bottles are among objects on the Victorian dressing table at right. Walls are covered in Shamrock paper, and Grand Paisley is draped over the tub.







ANIMAL MAGNETISM

Choosing 1,000 Oriental treasures for the Smithsonian's new Arthur M. Sackler Gallery

BY DODIE KAZANJIAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY TINA FREEMAN

As you hold this carving of a goose in your hand, it feels comfortable," says Dr. Thomas Lawton, holding in his palm a Song dynasty jade that will be on view at the opening of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery. "It's a fondling piece which the Chinese literati figures especially liked. All that you see in the way of detail is the head of the goose, which is drawn back on its own body. It's nestled in the simply articulated wing. The other parts of the body are purely abstract with the exception of the simple webbed feet on the bottom. Again very simply indicated, and yet you're aware of its being a goose. More important still, it just feels good to the touch, and that was what the artist wanted."

Dr. Lawton continues: "The scholarly class always placed great prize on these small pieces, which were meant to be held while a scholar was thinking, even while talking with another. You can imagine them discussing problems that related to connoisseurship, collecting, and just turning over in the hand a particularly important piece. It's just a human quality that the

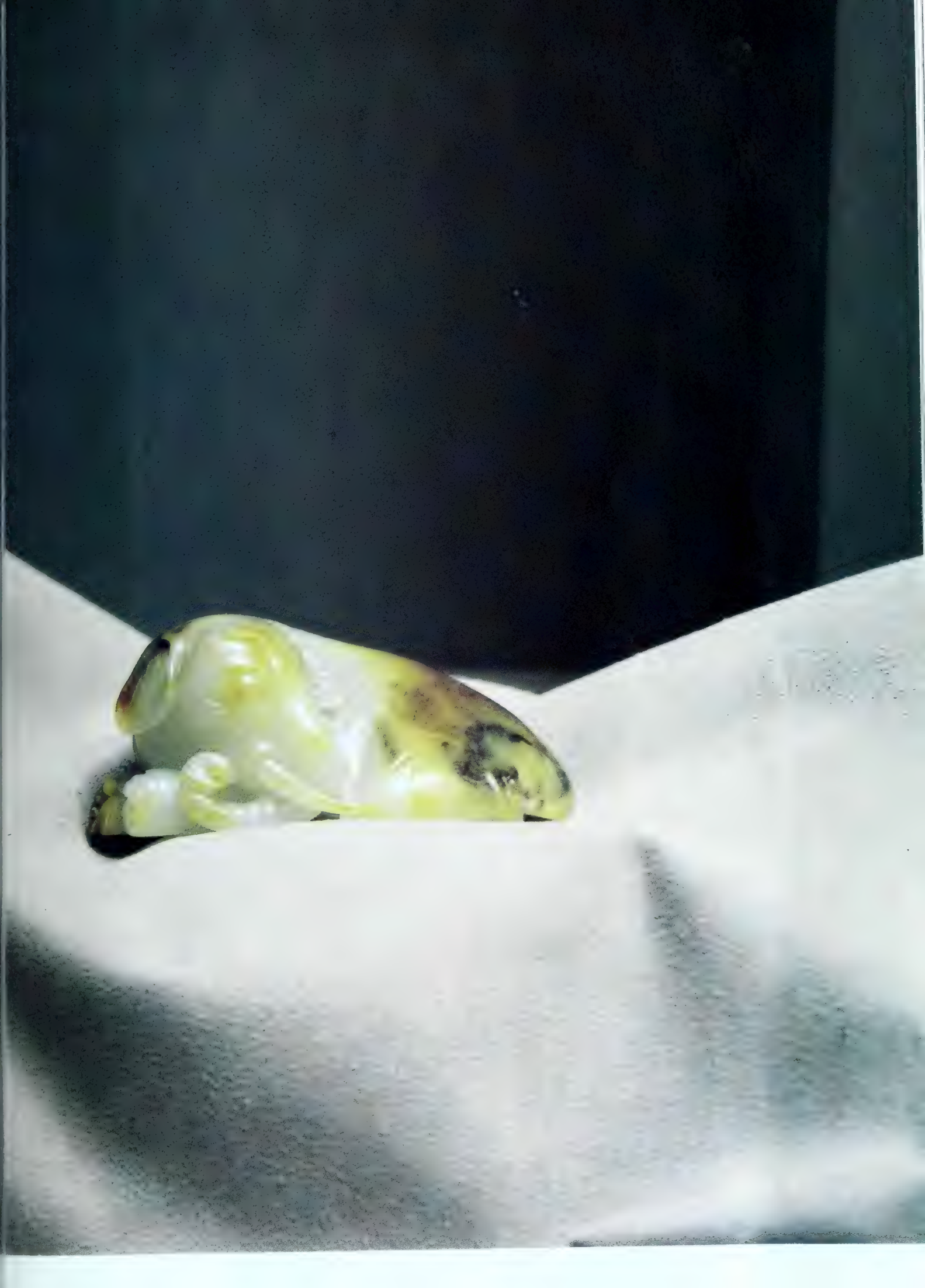


Among the selections by gallery director Thomas Lawton: a lion-spouted silver and gold-leaf rhyton, *above,* from Iran, c. 100 B.C.–A.D. 100, and a ceramic bull, *left,* from northwestern Iran, c. 1350–800 B.C. *Opposite:* Detail of an Iranian silver-and-gilt rhyton with a bull's head, c. 100 B.C.–A.D. 100, above 3,000-year-old Chinese jade goose and stag pendants, Western Zhou dynasty. *Inset:* A jade ring ornament, Yuan–Ming dynasties, and a jade quadruped water dropper, Han dynasty–Six Dynasties period.

...eveloped to a very
...gh...ned degree."
...ight think this is a
...t to say about one three-
inch jade goose. But Tom
Lawton is well qualified to
interpret the intentions of
Chinese scholars and artists.
He is the director of the
Arthur M. Sackler Gallery,
the Smithsonian Institution's new museum of Asian and Near Eastern art which opens in Washington, D.C., on September 28. Lawton, a scholar of Chinese art, is also director of the Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art. And this goose is only one of a thousand objects he personally chose from Dr. Sackler's world-renowned Asian art collection.

Dr. Arthur M. Sackler, who died in May, was a pioneer in biological psychiatry. He was also a successful entrepreneur and a philanthropist who became one of this country's leading art collectors and patrons. While continuing to practice medicine, he made a fortune in medical advertising, medical trade publications, and the manufacture of pharmaceuticals. Beginning in the1940s, he collected art from several important periods, including pre-Renaissance, Post-Impressionism, and the School of Paris, as well as the work of contemporary American artists. About 1950 he became interested in Oriental art. Dr.

The carefree reclining jade elephant of the Ming dynasty probably used to sit on a scholar's desk. Removable flaring antlers top a central Asian copper alloy stag, 1st millennium A.D.







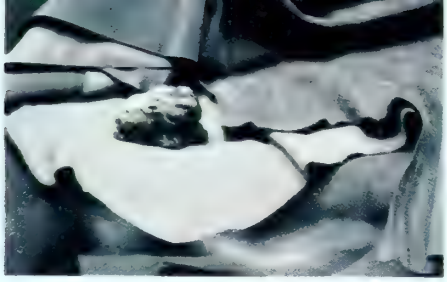
Sackler, whose collection numbers in the tens of thousands, never sold one object. But he gave much of it away. From the Metropolitan Museum in New York to Harvard University to Beijing University in China, museums, galleries, and wings around the world bear his name.

In 1982, Tom Lawton was charged with choosing any one thousand objects he wanted from Dr. Sackler's collection of Asian art, a king's ransom of pieces from China, the Near East, and Southeast Asia. "It was agonizing. There's nothing so covetous as an aging museum director," says this museum director. "To think that these objects were really going to come to us. I was concerned with geographical and chronological sweeps and balances. I tended to do it in categories of materials. We knew that in Dr. Sackler's Asian holdings his Chinese jades and bronzes were largest in number and probably finest in overall quality." He finally selected more than 600 Chinese jades and bronzes—475 jades and 153 bronzes to be exact. The rest of the Sackler Gallery's holdings are Chinese paintings and lacquer, ancient Near Eastern objects, and sculpture from southern and Southeast Asia.

The very first piece he chose was a bronze pear-shaped Shang dynasty *you*—a ritual wine vessel—decorated with an owl. "If I had to choose one Chinese bronze in the entire collection and say daringly, 'That is the finest bronze,' I would say this is in terms of its design, quality of casting, and degree of sophistication. It epitomizes what I think the Shang bronze casters were trying to achieve."

The second object he selected is a fourth-century Sasanian antelope rhyton made of silver with gilt, obviously the property of an ancient Near Eastern ruler. "This is a drinking cup. You see, there is a spout down below where the wine would come out." A rhyton was used on ceremonial occasions; it's not hard to imagine a servant holding it and wine flowing through it into the drinker's mouth. Lawton recalls, "It's a piece that I saw for the first time at the Asia Society in the 1970s. Ever since then it was always on my mind. An aspect of rhytons is that they're so unstable as a form. It's not like a glass you can just put down and it

(Text continued on page 220)







A jade bear from the Han dynasty, *top,* was regarded as lucky by women hoping for male children. *Above:* The silver-and-gilt 4th-century antelope rhyton is from Iran. *Left:* An owl decorates a ritual wine vessel, and taotie masks dominate a wine server, both bronze from the Shang dynasty. *Opposite above:* Three elegantly carved jades: a Song dynasty horse and ram and a Tang dynasty dog. *Opposite below:* A northwestern Iranian gold drinking vessel in the shape of a ram's head, c. 550–331 B.C.



A VITRINE FOR ART

Juan Montoya designs for a Manhattan collector



Living with art is not always easy. A gentle reconciliation must be effected between the domestic needs of the occupants and the varying exhibition requirements of the artworks. As this apartment lucidly illustrates, sizable paintings by Jean Michel Basquiat and Fernando Botero demand ample viewing room to appreciate fully the coruscating colorations of one and the corpulent contours of the other. Delicate ivory objects and sturdy bronze sculptures best maintain their aplomb in a calculatedly close confinement. On the other hand the sinuous lines of large statues and solid urns thrive if starkly isolated in the visual field.

In designing this apartment in Manhattan for a married couple with a wide-ranging taste in art, Juan Montoya has emphasized the clarity of space by using a soft gradation of direct and ambient light, the reflectivity of smooth surfaces, and the tranquillity of subdued tones—muted blues, blacks, ivory, and pearl gray. He has created a glistening, limpid interior that cooly accepts its status as a virtual frame and vitrine for art. Lacquered columns and ceilings, glass walls painted a deep cerulean blue on the back, black glass shelves, and tightly gridded wood screens sliding over windows syncopate the space and modulate the light. The gleaming dark columns create a dramatic portal to the living room and subdivide it from a more intimate and shadowy sitting alcove. The paintings, hung discreetly from channels at the tops of the walls, are carefully lit with halogen fixtures inserted in the soffit of dark beams at the periphery of both rooms. Yet Montoya has not neglected the normal furnishings and appointments of daily life. Here the plump upholstered sofas and chairs and the Montoya-designed cabinetry, coffee tables, and other built-in units quietly instill in these rooms an air of simplicity and comfort. □

Editor: Jacqueline Gonnet

A Jean Michel Basquiat painting, *left,* vividly highlights the foyer. *Below:* Black-lacquered columns topped by "capitals" of square acrylic glass tubing emit a soft glow from light fixtures inserted within the columns.



BY SUZANNE STEPHENS
PHOTOGRAPHS BY OBERTO GILI



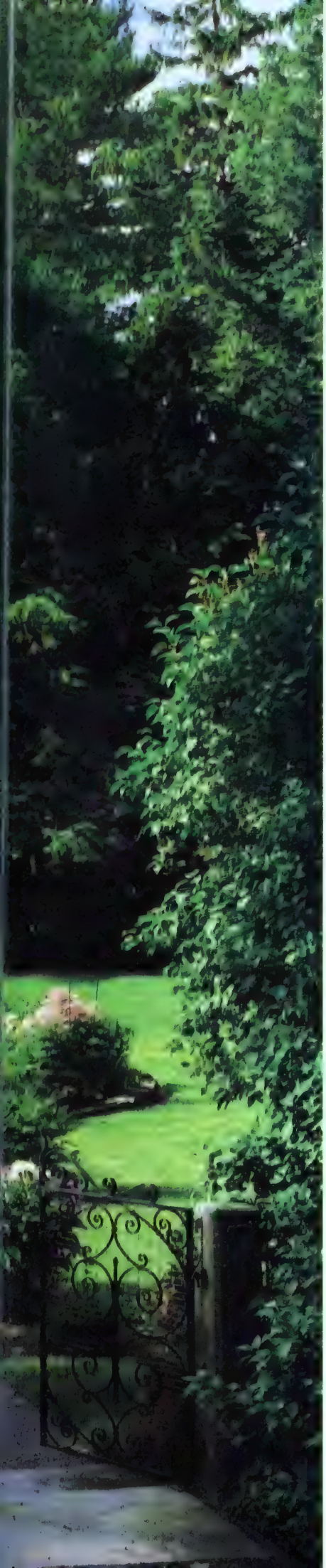




An alcovelike space, *right,* is set apart from the living room by a second pair of lacquered columns: black glass wall and gridded screen form a suitably hushed backdrop for a bold painting by Moise Kisling, painted urn by Jonathan Nash Glynn, and torso by Ernest Trova. The copy of an Egyptian chair was executed in ivory and ebony by the owners' son. *Top:* A painting by Julio Larraz appears to float against a mirrored wall in the dining room. The florid gilt-and-lacquer Chinese Deco chairs were designed by Paul Frankl in 1929. *Above:* The bedroom, with figures by Lynn Chadwick and an African carved-wood antelope head.









A GARDEN HERITAGE

A family domain virtually unchanged since 1830

BY ULYSSES G. DIETZ
PHOTOGRAPHS BY CURTICE TAYLOR

I arrive at the Meadows, dazzled as always by the startling luxuriance of an upstate New York spring. Putting my car in the graveled yard by one of the weathered brown barns, I circle back to the front of the house. The tall square house with its tawny-washed pink brick, sparkling white trim, and black green shutters is warm and inviting. Characteristically my hostess answers the door herself and, shunning the formal rooms at the front, takes me back to her sitting room, carved out of the service wing early in this century as a schoolroom for her and her siblings. It is here that we talk.

My hostess was not born here, but in the village a short distance away. Her family moved into the Meadows when she was two months old—eighty years ago. She has lived in or nearby the Meadows ever since. The great square Classical house was built by her great-grandfather in 1827. He was the brother-in-law and adopted son of the man who founded the village in the late eighteenth century. Ever since the first settlers came to this area, the land has been in her family. The house and gardens came during the Greek Revival

Details have changed since this western New York garden was laid out about 1830, but the basic design is unaltered. A central walk, *left,* bordered by herbaceous beds flanked by lawns and then more borders, leads to the woodland. *Above:* Looking back the length of the garden to the recently glassed-in veranda.



Dividing the pasturelands from the woodland and formal gardens, the stream, *opposite,* rises from a spring on the property, flows in a stone-lined bed past a small barn-red woodshed and banks of ferns and daylilies to empty into a nearby creek. *Above:* The barn-red Chinese bridge was assembled about 25 years ago by a local carpenter to a design by an engineer houseguest. *Below:* Stone-edged beds in the garden hold part of the collection of peonies hybridized by Percy Saunders and his daughter, Silvia.



era, once the family ventured outside the village and built country seats that took advantage of the picturesque surroundings.

My hostess's mother grew up on the estate, and her young family moved here when her widowed mother decided it was too much to cope with alone. She returned to the family's gothic cottage in the town, and the third generation began its tenure in 1906. When at the death of their sister the remaining siblings had to decide who would take on the house and grounds, it was my hostess who accepted the role of steward.

"Today," she notes, "when somebody dies, the house is broken up. There's no continuity." Her two brothers balked at moving to the Meadows, believing that their wives wouldn't feel free to change things. "Well, I said to them, 'You know *I'll* change it, don't you?' And they answered that since I had grown up here and since I knew what the place really was, I would keep it the same." She adds, "And they were right—things have changed, but the atmosphere remains."

"My family has always had a dual interest—the village and the farms," says my hostess. She has in fact been a major figure for many years in local preservation efforts—efforts that have kept the town as charming as it was in the mid nineteenth century when her great-grandparents were living at the Meadows. For all its quaintness, however, the village remains a working farm town, surrounded by the miles of fertile crop and dairy land which first brought settlers here in the 1790s.

Such continuity is strikingly apparent at the Meadows. The farmland around it has been sold to active farmers, leaving 86 acres of land with the house. This land has been kept much as it was throughout the house's history. At the entrance to the estate are the meadows that gave the land its name: open fields that are not cultivated but mowed occasionally to keep them from going wild. To one side of the house are the orchards. Just as the meadows were once active hayfields, the orchards were once a supply of apples. Today the century-old trees function ornamentally, keeping the layering of the park in evidence. Closer to the main house the lawns begin. Here the grass was always more manicured, *(Text continued on page 226)*



The houses and gardens came during the Greek Revival era, once the family ventured outside the village that they founded in the late eighteenth century and built country seats that took advantage of the picturesque surroundings



FLYING COLORS

A house in the Hamptons decorated by Rosemary Gilman for a former chief of protocol

BY ALICE GORDON

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MICK HALES





A wood barn stuccoed by a previous owner, the house of Marifé Hernández and Alan Alpern, *opposite,* was opened up with several new pairs of French doors. *Above:* In the living room green Stark industrial carpet and blue-ground chintz bow to expanses of lawn and sky. Three seating areas accommodate 24. Wallpapered screens, Brunschwig. Except where noted, all patterned fabrics from Cowtan & Tout.



The dining room, *above,* seats 16, but for larger parties an adjoining conservatory/dining pavilion is planned. Curtain fabric, Brunschwig. *Opposite:* "Flowers are extremely important to me," says Marifé Hernández, whose bedroom reiterates the preference for floral patterns shown throughout the house. Bench fabric, Brunschwig.





Rosemary Gilman started decorating for Marifé Hernández about fifteen years ago when they were introduced by Hernández's first husband. "I know her!" he said when he saw Gilman's picture in a magazine column on decorators to watch. "How tropical," said his conservative mother after Gilman was through with her son's apartment. Gilman, a painter since the age of eight, had begun using bright pinks and blues at a time when popular decorating choices were neutral yellows and greens. She approaches rooms as she approached pattern design, which was her profession before decorating: this element belongs here and repeats successfully there; these colors together are not only beautiful, they make sense.

Vivid colors are necessary to Marifé Hernández, as befits a *puertoriqueña divertida*. Her preferences reflect a colorful life. As a television broadcaster in New York, she interviewed Jimmy Carter and later became his chief of protocol; now she heads her own marketing company, advising such clients as Coca-Cola and the British Tourist Authority. A possible fourth career suggests itself in the pleasure she takes in working with Gilman.

Gilman and Hernández are in tune enough to confuse tradespeople who usually can tell who is client and who is decorator. Both women dealt coolly and efficiently with the only major problem in the decoration of Nôtre Plaisir, the house in the Hamptons where Hernández would take up residence after her marriage to its owner, Alan Alpern. Gilman's fourth project for Hernández, the house was to be made ready by June 1985 for the couple's return from their wedding at Chartres and honeymoon at Château d'Esclimont. In April the dominant fabric for the living room arrived in an irredeemably off color. Marifé Hernández was not going to have her first summer at Nôtre Plaisir precluded by an uncooperative chintz. In one intense work session at Cowtan & Tout, she and Gilman chose an all-new suite of fabrics, wisely considering only what was in stock.

Two months later, as Hernández and Alpern drove along Highway 27 toward home, Rosemary Gilman adjusted the last flower in the last vase, and the carpet man knelt by the fireplace putting in a few more tacks. "Get out of here, out!" she pleaded with him. In another ten minutes the new couple crossed their new threshold, exactly readied by their experienced friend. ◻ *Editor: Carolyn Sollis*



Nighttime illumination emphasizes the villa's orderly symmetry. *Opposite:* Projection of the plan from the south

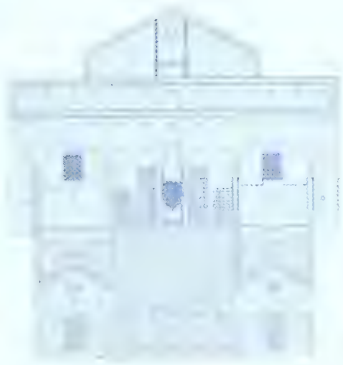


VILLA CIVILITY

Belgian architect Jo Crepain uses modern materials with classic restraint

BY COLIN AMERY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY RICHARD BRYANT



From time to time a house appears that sets a new standard and changes the rules. When Bob and Magda De Wachter decided to build in a leafy suburb of the Belgian city where they work as financial advisers, they knew that they wanted something very different from the thatch and half-timbering of their neighbors. Typical Belgian suburban architecture is derived from the closely packed, gabled brick and tile houses—some with thatched roofs—of the little ports and towns of the region. The De Wachters wanted instead a contemporary house that could be for its time as significant as the Palais Stoclet in Brussels or Belgium's Art Nouveau houses of the nineteenth century were in theirs.

Bob De Wachter in particular has a keen interest in modern art and architecture. With his wife he searched design and architectural journals for the kind of house they wanted, and they found the work of Jo Crepain, one of Belgium's leading residential architects, to be the most sympathetic.

The architect says that he has probably never had such an extensive dialogue with any other client. The De Wachters have a twenty-year-old son, Wout, and all three members of the family participated actively in every de-



Glass bricks and a grillwork corridor, *above,* allow light from the central court to filter through the house. *Below:* Entrance from court.



cision. The need was for a family house that allowed the diverse lifestyles of the three to operate together at times and separately at other times. The architect's design evolved from 24 sketch proposals, with the owners finally settling on a plan for a house that had two wings embracing a central courtyard, almost like a Mediterranean villa. The style of the house is stripped-down Modern Classicism, what Crepain calls a "remembrance of Rome and Athens."

A villa around a central court allows for a sense of separation and privacy, yet the court, sheltered by the wings of the house, also looks out onto the road and surrounding woodland. One is part of a private world that still has an opening to the public realm. The motto of the house, says Bob De Wachter, is *Foris ut mos est intus ut libet* (from Horace), which he translates as: "Outside in the Forum, you behave as the law tells you to—inside, you do as you like."

The De Wachter villa speaks a clearer and more definitive language than its rather staid and conventional neighbors. It is built of pinkish and gray blockwork—simple but elegant—and the two gabled wings project from the high back wall of the house. Four sentinel piers in front of the court are topped by simple plant-filled pots so that a wall of vine and greenery shelters the court in high summer. Bob and Magda De Wachter do not like clutter, and the blockwork walls appeal to their somewhat austere tastes.

The simple grid of the plan is exceptionally rational. The court, which is really an outdoor room perfect for daytime activities, faces south. In this sunny place Magda De Wachter has discovered the special pleasure of creating a courtyard garden in a northern climate. The two wings offer high rooms with galleries: a small study for Bob De Wachter overlooks the living room, and in the mezzanine above the kitchen and dining room a similar space allows a member of the family to watch TV without disturbing the rest of the household. Inside the high back wall of the house is a long gallery, which contains the De Wachters' art collection, and to the north is a fourth element of the building with service areas and, upstairs, two bedrooms with bathrooms; the son's *(Text continued on page 208)*



Pinkish blockwork, accented by gray, and four sentinel columns on the southern façade



Mies chairs surround a dining table and lamp designed by Steven Stals, who did much of the furniture



The living room's rectangularity is eased by a curved mezzanine; Wink armchair is by Toshiyuki Kita for Cassina



NEOCLASSIC BEAUTY

Built in 1810 by an Italian statesman and patron of the arts, Villa Melzi d'Eril is the inspired creation of an architect, a sculptor, and a painter

BY LORD LAMBTON PHOTOGRAPHS BY EVELYN HOFER

Apollo and the Muses with a frieze of Greek poets all in grisaille by Giuseppe Bossi decorate the ceiling, *opposite,* of Villa Melzi's main hall. *Above:* Oriental pavilion added to the grounds in 1870 has been a smugglers shelter but is now a ticket kiosk for garden visitors.







The Italian lakes are famed for their romance. Shelley, after all, was arrested on the shores of Lake Como for carrying a loaded pistol. Thousands of literary romances have occurred in the woods and mountains that surround the waters. Today the builder has done his best to destroy the beauty and wildness that had delighted generations of lovers of nature from Pliny to the twentieth century. But areas of enchantment remain. One of them is the country surrounding the Villas Melzi d'Eril and Serbelloni near the old town of Bellagio, which juts out into the center of Lake Como. Here the eye is refreshed after a long drive through onetime fishing villages into which have been crammed little concrete box houses of every shape and color.

All is forgotten and forgiven when you enter the lush scenery in which the Villa Melzi—a gem of Neoclassicism I had been told—stands fifty yards back from the water. The visitor will enter the gates and immediately see on his left a Japanese or Chinese garden with maples, water, and bridges. Afterward he will continue along the water's side down an avenue between pollarded plane trees, while again to his left perfectly cut lawns rise vertically covered with azaleas growing between giant trees, including the finest American oak I have ever seen in Italy. How, I wondered, could such steep slopes be so perfectly mown? Then I saw two gardeners standing on a ridge holding a thick rope tied to a mowing machine, which they slowly let glide down the hill before hauling it up again. The contrasting effect of steep slope and straight avenue is suddenly broken by a small Moorish temple, standing by the water, with four nineteenth-century marble busts looking incongruous beneath odd little slices of falling squares that might have been cut out of the Alhambra. Facing the temple on the land

Marble halls in Villa Melzi are actually *marmorino,* a composition of marble dust applied to the walls and painted. Here, the bust of a lady of the family in the gallery.

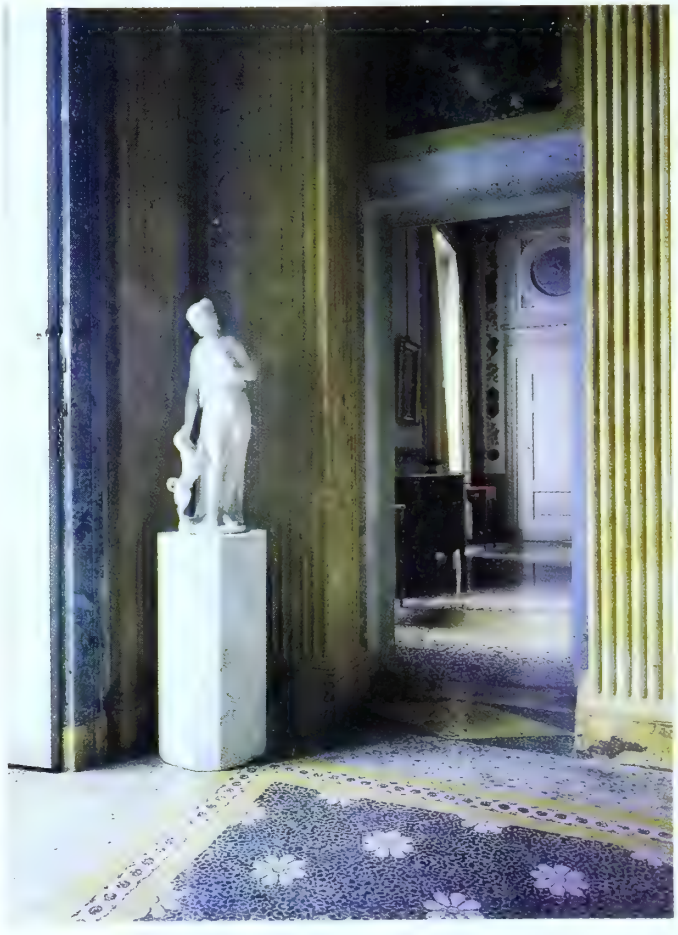


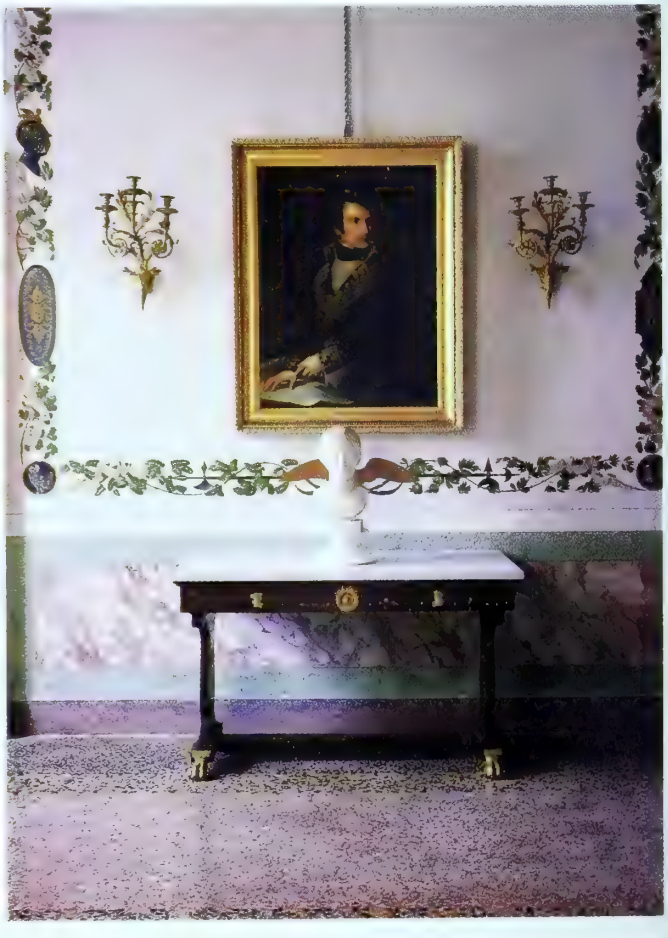
Villa Melzi's garden is famous for its collection of trees, which includes sequoias, *Cinnamomum camphora*, and a magnificent *Pinus montezumae*, the gift of Emperor Maximilian of Mexico.











Bust of Melzi d'Eril, builder of the villa, presides over portrait heads of family members and political allies in the gallery, *opposite*. Portrait medallions of contemporary artists in the lunettes refer to his role as Maecenas. *Top left:* Gouache panels by Bossi depict plants around Lake Como. *Top right:* Neoclassical sculptures populate sparely furnished rooms. *Above left:* Floors throughout are in marble mosaic *alla veneziana*. *Above right:* Napoleon in the uniform of president of the Italian Republic given by him to Melzi d'Eril, the vice president.



... stands a marble statue by Giovanni Battista Comolli (1775–1830), a Neoclassical sculptor unable to match the talents of Canova. The subject is an unhappy-looking Dante being led by Beatrice, standing on a sphere, toward, I suppose, Purgatory—this would explain his sadness, but that's where his occasional glimpses of her led him. The sculpture itself, according to tradition, led Franz Liszt to the composition of his *Dante* Sonata after his stay at the villa with Countess d'Agoult.

The villa (1808–10), undistinguished, white—it would fit well into Newport—is now owned by the Gallarati Scotti family. The family member who has devoted himself to its care and preservation is Count Ludovic Gallarati Scotti, a son of Duke Thomas, ambassador to London shortly after the last war. The count, a distinguished lawyer in Milan, met me at the back entrance. He looked aristocratic and worried and showed me at the south end of the park the Greek-cross Neoclassical chapel, again filled with Comolli's works. Beyond lies another large white building, which the count said belongs to his sister. This house is now empty. Between the two villas lies an unspoiled village and a little fishing port. Neither of them bustle with life, and over the little area hangs the hopeless inertia of nineteenth-century Italy. He then led the way to the orangery, now a family museum, in which are shown the keys of Milan given to Napoleon by his great supporter and the builder of the villa and surrounding curiosities: Melzi d'Eril, Duke of Lodi, vice president of Napoleon's Cisalpine Republic—later and briefly the Italian Republic—a patron of the arts, joint founder of the Brera Gallery, and from whom by marriage the Villa Melzi passed to the present family.

The count showed me around the garden again. The most impressive vantage point is a group of cypresses planted on an obtrusion on the sheer bank behind the villa from where a bust of the villa's architect, Giocondo Albertolli *(Text continued on page 210)*



Romantic murals in the billiards room were painted in 1810 by Alessandro Sanquirico, a famous set designer at La Scala.





LATE SUMMER SPICE

A Sunday lunch at the James G. Nivens

BY FERNANDA NIVEN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY WILLIAM WALDRON

If you love eating outdoors whenever possible, as I do, then you'll understand why summer is my favorite time to entertain. The spot where we set our table in the garden is framed by a wonderful wall with an old tree that hangs over our heads to cast lovely dappled shadows and protect us from the sun just as it becomes lunchtime. And we have fresh summer flowers from the garden to arrange for the table. I was particularly happy to have foxgloves because I could put them with the tablecloth I've made with my foxglove chintz. It's always a round table. A round table for me affords the best conversation: everybody can be a part of everybody else's, and that makes the lunch or dinner more free-flowing and happier. Eight or ten people can fit at a round table, so those are my favorite numbers. But I also enjoy entertaining entire families, parents and children, which means more tables. There is nothing more enjoyable than seeing a group of children running around the lawn laughing while the parents are sitting relaxed and having a good time.

This menu—chlodnik soup, meat loaf and sausages, arugula salad, Basque salad, Mexican chicken salad, and for dessert fresh whole peaches peeled and served with raspberry sauce and cookies—would be good for either kind of lunch. *(Text continued on page 202)*







Fernanda Niven, *above right,* may refer small informal lunches, but she is just s known for her masterly planning of ig benefits. *Above:* Perfectly colored for her oxglove-laden poolside table, chlodnik, cold soup, will be followed by eat loaf, sausage, spicy salads. *Right:* For essert, mint-garnished peaches with aspberry sauce. Recently she has turned her alents to the creation of fabrics, and the hintzes on the table, Ridgleyburn, and on he sofa cushions, Eugenia's Ribbon, re both from the Fernanda Niven Collection at Cowtan & Tout.

LATE SUMMER SPICE

(Continued from page 200) Food plays a real part in relaxing people, and for me it's most important that guests feel immediately at home in your house. If you are presented with very studied, perfect food, it creates almost a formal atmosphere. And at certain times that is appropriate. But one of the nicest compliments I ever had was when a friend sat down to the table and said, "Oh, thank heavens we're having real food."

There isn't a person in the world that doesn't love meat loaf. We particularly like the veal patties, made up as a loaf, from the first volume of *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*. Veal sausages cooked on the grill served with it make it very special. They make a simple background to play other combinations of tastes against, and a good menu should have a wonderful combination of tastes.

I chose chlodnik to begin with partly because I adore the wonderful raspberry color the beets give it and partly because I think it's fun to start with something a little unusual that guests may not have had before. It's a recipe from *Craig Claiborne's New York Times Video Cookbook*.

The arugula salad has a refreshing peppery taste—a complement to the meat loaf—and the arugula on Long Island in the summer is absolutely wonderful. The Basque salad, from *The Silver Palate Cookbook*, is a colorful combination of saffron rice, red and green peppers, salami, and prosciutto. The Mexican chicken salad, a recipe I found in Texas, also has a spicy but different taste. It is a combination of chicken, kidney beans marinated in a barbecue sauce, shredded cheese, avocado, two kinds of lettuce—iceberg and romaine—with tostada chips folded in at the last minute.



Meat loaf with grilled veal sausages, chlodnik, and trio of salads.

MEXICAN CHICKEN SALAD

1 pound chicken breasts, boiled and shredded
1 small onion, chopped
2 cups kidney beans, cooked and drained

Combine and chill, overnight if possible, in the following dressing:

¾ cup olive oil
¼ cup red wine vinegar
1 teaspoon sugar
1 tablespoon tomato paste
1 tablespoon chili powder
2 cloves garlic, mashed

Toss together in the salad bowl:

4 cups chopped iceberg lettuce
2 cups chopped romaine
½ cup chopped scallions

Heap marinated chicken and beans on lettuce. Top with:

2 cups grated cheddar cheese

Garnish with:

1 cup cherry tomatoes
1 large avocado, sliced
8 ounces tostadas, crushed

Toss all together before serving.
Serves 6 to 8

For the dessert select peaches with the most color because they are the most beautiful when peeled. If you can also get fresh raspberries, they make a wonderful and delicious garnish. With the peaches I usually serve either chocolate-chip or oatmeal cookies. There's always a choice of iced tea or white wine to drink—or sometimes champagne and grapefruit juice.

RANDY HIGI'S PEACHES WITH RASPBERRY SAUCE

8 large ripe peaches with as much blush as possible

Drop peaches into boiling water one at a time for about 2 minutes. Peel and dip in lemon juice to prevent discoloration. Arrange peaches on a platter. Garnish with fresh raspberries and mint. Serve the following sauce on the side:

2 packages frozen raspberries
½ cup sugar
Juice and zest of 1 lemon

Combine ingredients and boil for 5 minutes. Strain. Return to pan and boil until sauce reaches the desired consistency. □

Editor: Senga Mortimer

AMERICAN GRANDEUR

(Continued from page 115) tiger maple with gilded and winged paw feet and a marble-topped pier table, both made in New York about 1815, are also in the style of Lannuier, while an alcove bed in the French style is known to have been made by Duncan Phyfe for the New York nabob Montgomery Livingston. A handsome four-poster bed comes from Massachusetts, as do a couple of superbly executed chests of drawers, a sideboard, and a set of nine lattice-back dining-room chairs.

Throughout the house are a number of notable paintings by, among others, Albert Bierstadt, Eastman Johnson, John Kensett, Raphael Peale, Asher B. Durand, and George Inness. The landscapes depicted are often of New England, and we are reminded again that culture outwits fixed boundaries of time and space: the Banks collection is a deft weaving of North and South, past and present, the exquisitely complex and the no less exquisitely simple. The house and its treasures cast their spell: gilt, brass, waxed wood, the twinkle of crystal. It is twilight and a time for the offering of libations. The choices are many, but the past is receding and with it recede the temptations of Madeira, no matter how ancient. One must show respect for today as well as yesterday. And so yes, why not? An ice-cold vodka martini will do very well. □ *Editor: Jacqueline Gonnet*

CAMPARI



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Campari and Orange Juice

Campari and Soda

Campari on the rocks

CAMPARI. THE SPIRIT OF ITALY.



The east façade is the working front of Clos Pegase; grapes are received through the entry beneath the imposing portico at center

(Continued from page 156) a commercial project."

After two elimination rounds and an intense final charrette (the architectural design marathon preceding a presentation), the competition was won by Michael Graves and Edward Schmidt, a painter whose classically inspired friezes are the direct correlate of Graves's architecture. But there was far more going on in Graves's design than the straightforward satisfaction of programmatic requirements, signaled by the poetic statement Graves submitted along with his typically gorgeous renderings and convincingly detailed model. "The myth of Pegasus," the architect wrote, "tells us that the hoofprints struck by the winged horse landing on Mount Helikon were the beginning of the spring of the Muses, the founding of the arts. The waters of the spring can be seen as providing both spiritual and physical sustenance, as the arts inspire our imagination and the waters irrigate our fields. It is fitting that Dionysus, god of wine, was the favorite pupil of the Muses, for also within the art of wine making, there exists the duality of the process of making the wine and the pleasure of drinking it."

This is intoxicating stuff—a call to greatness, not to say immortality—which Graves casts about this work like a pagan incantation. Certainly he has worked up Clos Pegase into a far more elaborate proposition than it need be in any practical sense, as can be seen by contrasting the Shrem winery with some exceptionally simple setups nearby which produce fine wines without benefit of architectural splendor. On the other hand, the Graves design as built is far less of an intrusion in the Napa landscape than some locals claim it to be. Right across the road from Clos Pegase is the entrance to the high-profile Sterling Vineyards. There, a little cable car whisks tourists up a slope crowned with dazzling white Modernist monoliths visible at a much greater distance than the earth-colored components of the Graves complex.

The Shrem winery, which is reported to have cost $3.2 million to construct (in addition to $1.5 million for the property and an estimated $12 million in up-front wine production expenses), is greatly reduced in scope from Graves's prizewinning scheme. His original conception was a kind of Hadrian's Villa West, a series of extremely varied, loosely joined Classical episodes. But unlike the sprawling Roman prototype at Tivoli, Clos Pegase is quite concentrated, occupying only a small portion of the fifty-acre site, most of which was reserved, intelligently enough, for growing grapes.

Some of the scaling down was pragmatic. The two largest components of the initial presentation—barrel-vaulted structures for storing wine casks and cases of bottles, accounting for 19,500 square feet altogether—were eliminated in favor of traditional caves dug into the hillside. Other decisions were clearly meant to be cost-saving or in response to local planning restrictions. The sculpture garden, which had been one of Jan Shrem's fondest fantasies, has been put on hold, as has the very heart of Graves's symbolic order: the roofless three-tiered rotunda ringed with cypresses on the two upper levels (reminiscent of the tomb of the emperor Augustus), a metaphorical mountain juxtaposed against the real hill behind it. The cutbacks cannot be seen as entirely negative, however. In fact, the scaling down of the original could well have contributed to the rigor this design now exudes. (Significantly, the much less successful Shrem house atop the knoll has been carried out, on the exterior at least, almost precisely as Graves had designed it.) Workmanship throughout is excellent, and there is no sense of false economies. Best of all, Clos Pegase is free of not only the ditzy details that give Graves's Capistrano Library an annoyingly fey demeanor but also the lush flourishes that infuse his Humana Building of 1982–85 in Louisville with an aura of corporate imperialism. But even in its reduced state, the Clos Pegase winery is a powerful presence. It is certainly the most pleasing of all of Michael Graves's executed designs and raises renewed hopes that he might indeed attain the difficult goal he has set for himself: the reconstitution of a contemporary Classical architecture worthy of the name.

That aspiration is clear in the number of precursors who come to mind in a tour of the winery complex, among them the anonymous builders of Tuscan farm structures, Sir John Soane, Karl Friedrich Schinkel and his disciple Ludwig Persius, and Josef Hoffmann. Particularly apparent is the influence of the great French Neoclassicists of the late eighteenth century, the so-called Revolutionary architects whose ornamentally reductive but geometrically intensified aesthetic brought Classicism into the modern age. They were led by Étienne Louis Boullée and Claude Nicolas Ledoux, and the new winery is rich with the memory of Ledoux's masterpiece, the royal saltworks at Chaux, built between 1773 and 1779. Although some of the most famous motifs at Chaux are lacking, such as the distinctive rusticated columns that have been copied elsewhere of late, Graves has clearly adopted Ledoux's principles of massing and proportion: the low-slung, embracing elevations; the lengthy colonnades weighed down by outsize pedi-

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[illegible] used to aggrandize [illegible] rather than distract from it.

Robert Venturi, the architect and theorist who helped reinstate a respect in his profession for history, has written ironically of "parvenu Classicism, with, in its American manifestation, a dash of Deco and a whiff of Ledoux." There is more than a bit of both here, but Graves is by now no parvenu. This design is evidence not of looting but of learning from the past, in diametric opposition to such debased strategies as Philip Johnson and John Burgee's straight crib of Ledoux's unbuilt House of Education for Chaux, which they recycled into their University of Houston College of Architecture of 1983–85 in Texas. To a greater degree than had been true heretofore in Graves's work—and Postmodernism in general—the architect of Clos Pegase has endowed it with a clarity and coherence that makes one think of the winery as the thing itself, before considering its sources within Graves's oeuvre or the history of architecture.



The Shrem house, also by Graves, surmounts the wooded knoll north of the winery

At the northern end of the Napa Valley a densely wooded hillock rises from the flat vineyard fields. Barely visible through its thickets of scrub oak as one approaches along Highway 29 are the pavilions of the Shrem house surmounting the small peak. Beneath the villa, the buildings of the winery reveal themselves only after one turns off the highway and onto the access road. Both the residential and commercial portions of the tile-roofed Clos Pegase complex are clad in stucco, painted a terra-cotta color on the base and a rich creamy buff above. This layering anchors the buildings visually and breaks down the impact of their mass, which at certain points is considerable. Those two tones are separated throughout by a narrow lateral band of blue, a device that ties the whole together horizontally while underscoring the division vertically. Graves has used these colors before but never to better effect.

Nearing the winery, visitors might be easily misled by Graves's use of Classical elements in that one gravitates automatically toward the grandest segment, a huge portico facing east toward the access road as one arrives. Actually this canopy (supported by four pairs of 24-foot columns) marks the main service entrance to the winery, the receiving bay where grapes are brought for crushing during the harvest. Much less obvious is the public portal at the center of the south façade, oriented to the highway rather than the approach road perpendicular to it. Unless Graves means to say that grapes are more important here than people, without signs or guides to point tourists toward the visitors' entrance, this hierarchy of forms causes confusion. It seems an odd underemployment of the Classical language, which, we are told by the Postmodernists, has powers of signification that Modernism thoroughly lacks. Graves himself has frequently criticized International Style buildings for failing to indicate processional routes or emphasize entrances. Here we have a division between the winery's two domains, the ceremonial and the workaday, but which is which is not easy to determine.

Large parking lots—black asphalt parterres in front of both elevations—do not offer the most felicitous foreground for an Arcadian temple, but in rural California they remain an inevitable necessity. Gauche though they may be, the parking lots seem more justifiable next to the roadway rather than hidden behind the winery on precious arable land. Once one has been set along the straight path to the visitors' center, one comes to a monumental portal bisected by a 22-foot stucco Tuscan column. It gives onto a dramatic atrium open to the sky and facing, through a mirror-image center-column portal, a romantically landscaped garden. This delightful clos is bounded on the south by the visitors' and office wing, on the east by the winery wing, and on the north by a Schinkelesque tank building (where vats of fermenting wine are kept) and, above it, the hill and the proprietor's house. Dead center in front of the entrance to the tank building is a stalwart 65-foot California oak, original to the site. To make the central doorway line up axially with the tree, the plans were shifted one and a half feet to one side. The proposed three-tiered rotunda would form the western enclosure of this serene space.

The interiors of the buildings range from the no-nonsense nature of the working wings to the more detailed, though scarcely elaborate, treatment of the offices and tasting rooms. None are as extensively decorated as, say, Graves's seminal series of showrooms for SunarHauserman, the office furnishings manufacturer. The walls are hung with paintings from the Shrem collection, which runs to Surrealism and postwar European abstraction, and elsewhere with reproductions such as blowups of harvest scenes from medieval manuscripts, copies of Roman bas-reliefs of grape-stomping satyrs, and versions of Redon's flying horse. The fate of Edward Schmidt's allegory of the wine-making cycle intended for the inner walls of the rotunda is linked to that of the magic mountain itself, though there is talk of smaller murals elsewhere.

Whether or not Jan Shrem takes Michael Graves's plans to their full culmination, the two have already made an important contribution to their respective disciplines. Here for once is a building type that will bear with total grace the full weight of Graves's Classical and mythological conceits. Yes, wine can indeed be made in a tar-paper shack, just as it can be drunk from a paper cup. But architect and client have chosen a more elevated means of expression and in doing so have raised two ancient arts—architecture and wine making—to a height that resonates with echoes of the ages.

Editor: Heather Smith MacIsaac

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MARVIN WINDOWS ARE MADE TO ORDER.

(Continued from page 186) bedroom has a loft bed tucked up into the roof space so the room itself can be used as a study.

When you arrive in the double-height gallery that runs the entire width of the house, there is a moment of grandeur. The architect has installed an open steel grille as the floor of the upper corridor, which, although a bit tough on bare feet, allows light from the pierced walls to illuminate the whole high space. Cloisterlike spaces like this are rare in private houses, and this one is superbly effective.

The house is deceptively simple. In reality it demanded a great refining of plan and detail between architect and client. Before he became a businessman, Bob De Wachter was a student of literature, and since he continues his scholarly interests when at home, he wanted the architect to provide a quiet cool atmosphere. He is also a serious sailor, and one sees in the house the yachtsman's attention to organized small spaces. Details are tightly planned and everything has a purpose—as on a well-designed ship.

The black Belgian marble floors and white-painted walls provide dramatic contrasts and remove any necessity for elaborate decoration. The owners' tastes demanded few traditionally comfortable elements, yet there is a wood-burning stove in the living room and a gentle curve to the front of the mezzanine balcony. Glass bricks light the southern side of the house and the staircase, and because they are the smooth shiny variety, they add an element of sparkle to the interiors on bright sunny days.

Jo Crepain has pioneered a new kind of vernacular Classicism, much influenced by the rustic villas of the Veneto designed by Palladio. The achitect talks of the "transformation of the temple" when he discusses the design of the De Wachter villa, and indeed, its Classical antecedents are evident. While the forms of the main elements are clearly residential—walls and pitched roofs immediately say "house"—the way these elements are grouped and the monumental qualities of the simple materials suggest an ancient Mediterranean temple. In this case a temple celebrating simplicity, order, and privacy.□

Editor: Elizabeth Sverbeyeff Byron



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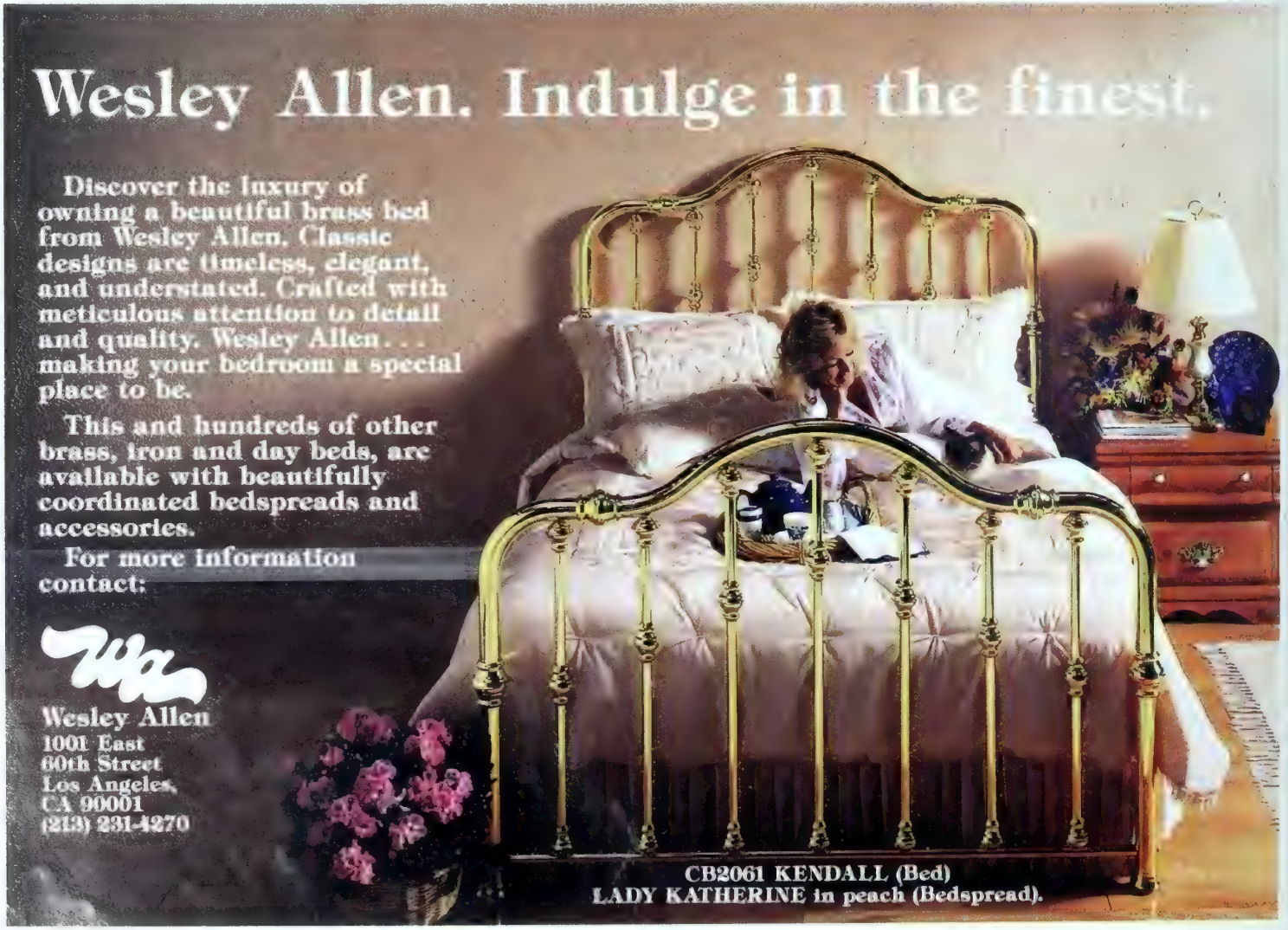
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...from page 198) (1742–1839), looks out on his own works. In the garden a miracle has been achieved in that despite 40,000 visitors a year the grounds have retained the air of a private garden. There is no hint of the iron bars surrounding the paths of the Villa Carlotta across the lake or rubbish bags or signs to keep off the grass, and none are needed. The garden and its pebbled paths remain unspoiled and tidy, and the owner's love and interest is shown by his binding together with iron ropes a dancing colony of pines whose absence would be sadly missed.

We entered the back door of the villa and were immediately joined by a distinguished-looking old lady who behaved to the owner in the same way as the gardeners. On neither side was there sycophancy or patronage, only natural affection. As we walked upstairs into the piano nobile, I received a shock. The house was almost devoid of furniture. It was uncanny going from nearly empty room to nearly empty room until I realized that the interior is a miracle of Neoclassical decoration by three artists who had collaborated without a sign of competition or self-assertion. These three unusually unselfish men were the architect and decorator Albertolli, the sculptor Comolli, whose works in the garden and church I have mentioned, and the painter and decorator Giuseppe Bossi (1777–1815), whose paintings can be seen in the Brera and Ambrosiana in Milan.

Albertolli, the guiding spirit, was also partly responsible for the great Villa Reale at Monza and the Neoclassical altar in the presbytery at San Marco in Milan. He had plenty of time to build, as he was 97 when he died. At the Villa Melzi it was he who designed the chipped marble floors, which were common in Venetia, forming floral and geometric patterns that uncannily blend with the Comolli carved-marble mantelpiece—far better carved than his sculptures—and Bossi's painted ceilings. The main rooms pretend to be lined with marble but in fact are made of *marmorino,* or marble ground into powder, mixed into paste, and spread an eighth of an inch thick over the walls. They were then, according to the count, smoothed with a hot iron and painted before they had dried. The shaped pillars cannot have been treated in the same way, but their hardness and the marble veining are entirely convincing. The count believes repairs cannot be made to injured sections by applying new *marmorino* paste and then painting it. If so, a decorative art has been lost. The spareness of the house has one advantage: you can see it exactly as it was when it was built. In the small drawing room the floral frescoes had been hidden by tapestries and, until these were removed, had been forgotten. If the ordinary viewer desires pictures and indolent men like myself long for a chair to sit on, the naked decoration is fascinating to designers and lovers of Neoclassicism, who should be grateful for the count's courage. □

Editor: Beatrice Monti della Corte





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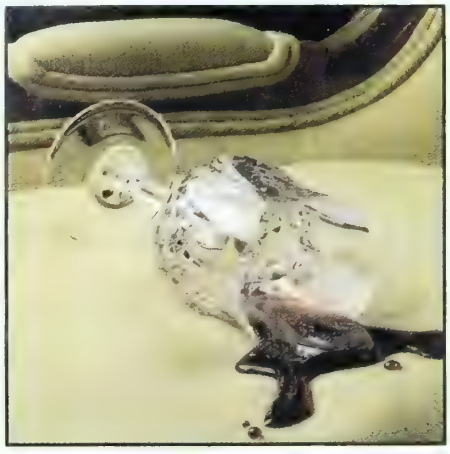
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(Continued from page 162) multi-million-dollar fabric and fashion business, was also involved in the creative process. A fellow of the Society of Industrial Artists and Designers, BA is an expert in the coloring of textiles, the effects of dyes and a master technician as well as an entrepreneur.

The son of a grocer from Brixton, South London, Bernard Ashley was born in 1926. At eighteen he went into the army and became a commissioned officer in the Royal Fusiliers. He was soon seconded to the Gurkha Rifles, serving in the Punjab where he took an interest in Indian textile design (the Laura Ashley stock now includes a large Indian-inspired collection).

In 1949 he married Laura Mountney, a civil servant's daughter from Wales who had been brought up a strict Chapel Baptist; they had four children. From a tiny workshop in Pimlico, operations moved first to a coach house in Kent and then in the early 1960s to their spiritual home at Carno in central Wales where the factory makes a significant contribution to the sorely stretched local economy. There are eleven factories worldwide, including one in the United States and one near Brussels.

Despite its ever-expanding growth, the organization retains its basic Baptist principles of good behavior (no bad language permitted, for instance) and unpretentious decency. The staff become, in every sense, shareholders. In memory of his wife, BA has set up the Laura Ashley Foundation, a worldwide charitable institution under the directorship of John Rae, the well-known English educationalist who is now applying the skills he once employed in the apparently impossible task of teaching me mathematics at Harrow School to supporting educational ventures.

Soon there will be an authorized biography of Laura Ashley, an intensely private person whose milk-white complexion and natural unaffectedness gave her the look of a farmer's wife rather than a high-powered tycoon. She had an indefatigable energy, and the Duchess of Devonshire once described how she would riffle endlessly through the dusty drawers in the attics at Chatsworth seeking new inspiration from a few old scraps of forgotten fabrics.

At rue Ducale one is particularly conscious of the Ashley spirit in the blissfully simple kitchen with its plain wood table and chairs, evoking a Welsh farmhouse in the middle of Brussels. BA points out that the dresser was in fact already there, and ever practical, Laura Ashley incorporated it into her artlessly soothing L-shaped design. The blue-and-white pattern (Mr. Jones), not to mention the plain wood draining board, triumphantly banishes all thoughts of clinical-age kitchens. There are no fussy cupboards; the chunky white crockery is stacked on open shelves—as you should dust it anyway before use, what is the point of hiding the stuff away?

By contrast, the dining room is positively stately. The walls are covered in lush garlanded green damask; there are religious paintings and a Classical figure in an *eau de Nil* niche. From the dining room the black and white flagstone hall, hung with gray and yellow fretwork paper, leads to the stairs. The pièce de résistance on the first floor is the marbleized oval room, which has four niches and an exquisite trompe l'oeil ceiling of clouds and sky.

Laura's special room in the house was a supremely understated period library. This room is a brilliantly recreated symphony of mid-green walls, stonewashed pilasters and panels, draped curtains, and inset bookshelves. The drawing room is slightly less formal but no less elegant: cool yellows and grays, old master paintings, and French-style furniture. There are display cabinets, made to order, and ivory models of Classical Rome.

Upstairs BA's bedroom is hung with the Infinity purple-and-cream paper with draped curtains. The womblike bed is enclosed in an alcove with more draped fabric. He strongly recommends this shut-in effect for a sound night's sleep.

For all its colorful diversity, the interior of the house on rue Ducale expresses a carefully thought-out wholeness. The house and indeed the entire Ashley empire are all of a piece. As BA expounds his well-organized thoughts on life it strikes one that he has graduated into a "gentil parfit knyght." I returned from Brussels convinced that the Ashley philosophy is no mere sales pitch but a design for living. □

Editor: Marie-Paule Pellé

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(from page 152) of Pinerolo? Then perhaps this enlightened sovereign is responsible for the surprise, the wonder, that awaits us on that little Alpine spur. A large church, too big for the valley, and below, some dissimilar constructions from which a lateral, not particularly large building stands out. Like the basilica, these buildings are pure *barocchetto*. The unexpected charm of this Juvarresque architecture in such a harsh and remote setting! Here the lofty architect seems to have interpreted that enchanted proportion by blending together the atmosphere of the time, certain French influences, and some of Vienna where he had been, along with memories of his native Sicily.

As in Turin, at the Palazzo Madama, Filippo Juvarra had applied to the front of the ancient castle his famous elegant stairs, at Villar Perosa a similar staircase, even if reduced in scale, was set against an ancient Waldensian farmhouse. In fact, these lands—closed in and protected by the high



Church, house, and garden at Villar Perosa

mountains and fertile enough to make them palatable after endless sieges and guerilla fighting—were taken from the Waldensians by the Savoys, then finally made a fief of Vittorio Amedeo II.

The ground floor, originally stalls and stables, has retained the low sturdy vaults of the seventeenth-century farm, so different from the airy stuccoed ceilings of the floor above. On this floor five rooms are enclosed between two galleries. The first gallery has a southern exposure and, like the stairway leading to it, has windows on the external arches. This was the winter gallery. The other one, facing north, has open arches, so it was the summer gallery. On some warm still evenings I have listened to the frogs croaking and followed the flicker of the last fireflies under these cool high loggias.

The winter gallery and these five rooms—for there were no more than that, suggesting a day's stay for the king during his inspection of garrisons, or maybe it was a hunting lodge—were highly decorated in the taste of the period. For Piedmont this was a golden age, which began after the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. Peace seemed to have settled at last in these valleys. For a long time the Piedmontese had been cooped up inside the walls of their cities, constrained by raids and invasions; with their new freedom they now began to dream again of *la vita in villa,* life in country houses. It was the start for building and rebuilding in the countryside.

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his administrators by the name of Piccone. Later the name of Turinetti di Priero turns up, and finally in 1811 the first Agnelli appears. A cavalry officer garrisoned at Pinerolo, he rented the house and the land, then bought them a few years later. In 1866 under the high brightly colored ceilings, surrounded by raving Chinese, Giovanni Agnelli was born. He was to found the first automobile factory in Italy, the Fiat.

From the last century on, these places seemed more frequently lived in. In the second half of the nineteenth century the large annex for the staff was built as well as the gardeners' houses. Rooms were also added in what is wrongly called the Castle, as stables and stalls were transformed into living quarters. Baths were installed, and the attic was made into large airy rooms. This is where the mother of the future senator settled after the marriage of her son, on that luminous mansard floor that Russell Page would so like. And it was thanks to her, this traveling, gardening great-grandmother, that taste of the moment arrived in this remote Alpine valley. She was responsible for the Victorian layout of the garden. She further tamed that steep descent beside the houses, creating new terraces. Then on the less steep slopes she had araucarias planted as well as sequoias and catalpas—which Russell Page would deplore—and also cedars of Lebanon and beeches, which have now grown to gigantic proportions. She amused herself on those terraces, often planting herself thick multicolored geometric borders around the rocaille fountains that she had had dug.

lence, was dreaming of French and Roman spaces and marbles. Unable to afford them, they invented them, helped by the effervescent imagination of the mountaineer craftsmen. Thus they created on their limewashed walls dizzying trompe l'oeils with abundant imitation of marble. In this climate of mad decoration, as if these inventions were not enough, a passion for the Far East developed, and above all for the *papier peint de Chine*. The Piedmontese were so fond of these exotic papers they would have stuck them up everywhere, but such paper was overexpensive, and again, rather than give up the idea entirely, they invented new solutions. Wherever possible the prestigious papers were used; elsewhere the mountain painters took over. Generous as they had been when painting marble fancies and flights of perspective, they now lavished their talents on Chinese scenes. So in Villar Perosa I found hundreds of Chinese pursuing one another from room to room and all along the gallery with a menagerie worthy of the Douanier Rousseau.

In those days the garden must have been virtually nonexistent. But those few terraces, probably dating from that time, placed in a curiously oblique way in relation to the house, somehow mumble of Le Nôtre. These level surfaces, wrested from the steep grassy slopes, are sustained by dry walls of those silver stones, against which the symmetrical dark green borders of ancient boxwood stand out well. But all the slopes of the surrounding valleys are marked by similar terraces. These contain vineyards and little vegetable gardens. Probably ours also served for the gardens and grapevines of the Waldensian farm.

At some unknown date in the first half of the eighteenth century, the Villar Perosa property, which had belonged to the Savoy dukes, was given by Vittorio Amedeo II to one of

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VILLAR PEROSA

In this sheltered corner the war also passed. Because of the great ball-bearing factory that occupies the bed of the valley, Villar Perosa and the house with it were bombed.

Then our turn came. I was married in 1953. My husband and I started planning the renovation of the enchanting ancient residence so that we could live there, at least for a part of the year. And we started thinking about the garden. This is when Russell Page came into our lives and into the history of the house. He liked to call himself garden designer, and along with an artistic temperament, he already possessed when I met him a vast experience and knowledge of plants and how they evolved. He knew how to create a landscape and had a great sense of beauty. He was an aesthete, but at the same time a religious man. Introspective, almost shy, he had a view of life that was sometimes contradictory but complex and deep. So intuitive that some of his reactions bordered on the clairvoyant. His extreme sensitivity caused him remote anxieties, and this secret anguish could sometimes explode in sudden rages, after which, however, he used to emerge cheerful once again. The project for the park at Villar Perosa made us friends, but our friendship did not keep us from having furious quarrels.

Although the garden had been enlarged in the last century beyond its few initial terraces, a fence in front and a wall behind still hemmed in the large building too tightly. We were thinking of expanding, and Russell Page helped us with his plan, which increased the space, incorporating a part of the fields in front and woods behind the house toward the mountain. He had also added a little bordering valley where a burbling stream flowed until, a bit farther down, it emptied into the Chisone. Expanding but, most of all, making plans for this future garden filled me with joy and mobilized my imagination.

Then the first clouds appeared in the clear sky of this new friendship: little clouds but already black and charged, if not with lightning at least with rumbling thunder. They were caused by the layout of the old garden. Russell was horrified by the result, now almost a century old, of the passions and efforts of the traveling, gardening great-grandmother. I, on the other hand, was afraid to change even a leaf. I feared that the *simpatia* of the house might be dispelled. That indefinable magic atmosphere could be swept away in an aesthetic chill. During our war, which ended in a Pyrrhic victory, I was passionately supported by Gaetano, our veteran gardener. Probably, as a child, he had been among the makers of those crammed flower beds and helped plant the catalpas and the monkey-puzzle trees and the grim firs close to the house.

So the long exhausting tug-of-war began between Russell and me. It went on for many seasons, but these battles did not separate us. On the contrary. I remember how I was then doubly fascinated by Russell, not only because of the way he thought and perceived things but also because of the skill and passion with which he developed "our" new plan. For his part he seemed to be a bit in love with this strange place, and he came back again and again for the rest of his life. He gave great attention and much time to this creation of his. As it began to take shape, gradually becoming a place of enchantment, Russell would take advantage of my enthusiasm and succeed in eliminating from the old garden a flower bed, a monkey-puzzle, or a clump of firs.

Many years have gone by. The garden has assumed its new dimension and space. But I miss the alert eye of Russell, who would have changed it, altered it, admitting mistakes that I would never have seen and again involving us in exhausting *pourparlers*. And in the big house his frequent presences are missed. Especially in the room he preferred, the vast room under the eaves which had been the room of his involuntary antagonist, the gardening great-grandmother. □

ANIMAL MAGNETISM

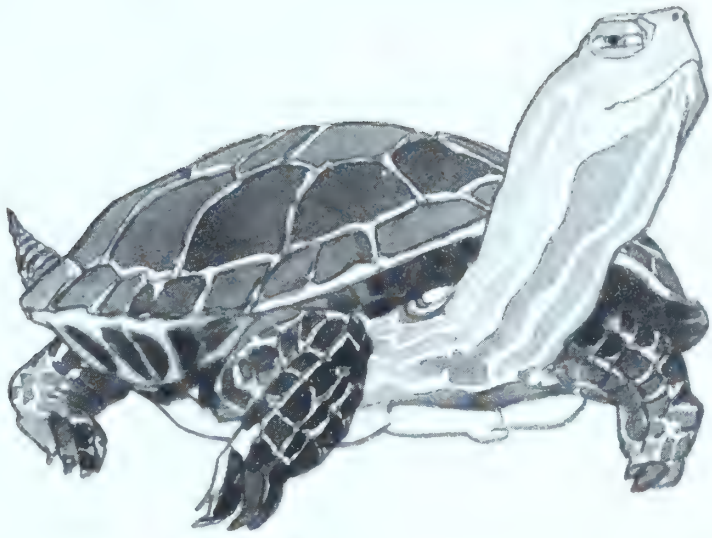
(Continued from page 170) stays stable; it must be held."

You can't observe the opening show without noticing the prevalence of animals. About one third of the one thousand objects Lawton selected are animals or animal-related. Underlining the importance and vitality of animal imagery in Chinese art is a special gallery called Monsters, Myths, and Minerals, which features animals and monsters carved out of jade, minerals, stone, silver, ceramic, and lacquer which date from the second millennium B.C. through the eighteenth century A.D.

Most animals in Chinese art are mysterious and fantastical figures that are rich with auspicious associations and meanings. There are representations of real animals, such as dogs, rats, bears, elephants, rams, oxen, and pigs as well as fantastic creatures like the phoenix, the winged chimera, and the mythical dragon, which, according to Chinese legend, has Nine Resemblances—the head of a camel, horns of a deer, eyes of a hare, ears of an ox, neck of a snake, belly of a frog, scales of a carp, paws of a tiger, and claws of a hawk. And then there are what museum curators call a quadruped—the term used to describe a four-legged creature—"when we're not certain what exactly it is," says the museum director.

It's clear that animals are of great importance to the Chinese, and as early as the late Neolithic period, about 5000 B.C., stylized representations of birds and fish appeared in Chinese art and seemed to have ritual associations. "When Chinese art emerges from the murky aspects of our understanding of what was China, already there was a preoccupation with animals," says Lawton. "And it continues right up to the present day."

Dr. Milo Cleveland Beach, assistant curator of the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, adds, "When the Chinese look at a lion or a bull, they have a completely different sense of what that animal means. Take the dragon. Because of Christian symbolism, we've come to



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the dragon as a symbol of evil. The dragon is something to go out and slay. For the Chinese it's unthinkable to slay the dragon because the dragon is the symbol of the great energy of the universe. It's not a black-and-white evil versus good. That would have no meaning to them."

Paintings from as early as the Song dynasty in the twelfth century reveal that animals were a familiar subject of literati artists. "Theirs is an intellectual approach," says Lawton. "You can appreciate a painting of a horse or a cat on a very superficial level. But if you look carefully you realize that the artist is really making a subtle joke about an earlier artist or tradition. It is that multilayered aspect of Chinese literati art that is always exciting. Regardless of how long you study it, there's always something more to find."

He turns to a tiny Chinese jade of a reclining elephant from the Ching dynasty. "The elephant in China, as is frequently the case in the West, is always regarded as symbolic of great strength, patience, and wisdom. And when Buddhism became very important in China, roughly the beginning of the Christian era, the elephant was frequently associated with those deities that were said to be wise. The artist who carved this elephant was concerned with taking advantage of the various colorations in the stone, the nephrite, and has used that as an aesthetic element. The artist, I think, is also making a joke. There's a wittiness about the way this lumbering animal is neatly compacted upon itself."

Elephants mean something quite different to the people of India. In another part of the show there is a large stone sculpture of the Indian god Ganesha, who has a potbellied human body and the head of an elephant. "An elephant is absolutely basic to the life of Indians," says Milo Beach, who is an Indian art scholar and former chairman of the Department of Art at Williams College. "Since 3000 B.C., Indian sculptors and painters have created extraordinarily sympathetic depictions of elephants in such a way that you get a sense these artists had looked closely at the elephant and really sympathized with the weight, the kind of wrinkled character, and the majesty of what the elephant was all about."

"We think the elephant is a strange, ungainly thing," continues Dr. Beach, "simply awkward and clumsy. But in Indian Sanskrit poetry a woman is often compared in her gracefulness to an elephant. Her arms should hang down by the side of her body like the trunk of an elephant. She should walk with the rumbling gait of an elephant. Hardly a metaphor for what we consider beautiful, but that in fact is the way an Indian looks at it. Consequently when an Indian views an elephant, it has all this residue of simply wonderful associations."

If there were a hierarchy of animals in China, Tom Lawton would put the dragon and phoenix on top. "Since the twelfth or thirteenth century the dragon and phoenix were associated with emperors. I would put the chimera or the lion following closely after them, although this is a very personal interpretation. Some of the great birds the Chinese represented, such as hawks and eagles, were regarded with awe and would be right up there, too. The bear and elephant immediately follow, and then you come to all these other creatures right down to something as ordinary as the pig."

With India in mind Milo Beach places the lion, "the most fearful and majestic animal" at the top, along with the elephant because it is an emblem of the Buddha as well as a symbol of the emperors. He puts snakes "down at the lower part of the hierarchy because in India the cobra in particular is deadly poisonous. In the Hindu system it's not only a symbol of creativity and fertility, it's also a symbol of death and destruction, a very nice union of opposites.

It was clearly the symbolic value of these pieces—the mind behind the art—that attracted Dr. Sackler. Milo Beach says, "As a psychobiologist and a research psychiatrist, he was very interested in the workings of the human mind, which took him back further and further to the earlier phases of cultures as we know them and into what he called a kind of origins of genius or creativity." Dr. Lawton adds, "Dr. Sackler didn't buy in a haphazard way. When he bought, he bought because he realized the pieces were important for specific reasons. He didn't always articulate why, but in light of recent archaeological explorations we know that these are extraordinarily important pieces. So, like many pioneers in a field, he made decisions that only he could tell us the specific reasons for. But looking at them later, we realize that this was a man guided by personal insights that we can only stand in awe of. He was not an ordinary man."

In addition to the one thousand objects, Dr. Sackler donated $4 million toward building the new museum, which is located on the Quadrangle behind the Smithsonian Castle, along with the similarly personal galleries of Charles Lang Freer and Joseph Hirshhorn. The Sackler Gallery is built entirely underground, as is the newly constructed National Museum of African Art, also opening on September 28. Both were designed by Boston architect Jean Paul Carlhian of the firm Shepley, Bulfinch, Richardson & Abbott. "The reason for their being underground," comments Tom Lawton, "is that the Fine Arts Commission said you may build the museums on the Mall but we don't want to have any further incursion onto the greensward."

Now Tom Lawton is talking about another object he selected for the opening show, a Chinese carved jade bear dating roughly from A.D. 200: "If we can believe the various folk legends, women who wanted male offspring would offer prayers to bears." Pointing to the bear, he continues, "This very small figure represents the animal with a beautifully stylized head with ruff springing out on either side of it and dramatically emphasized claws. In a very beguiling way, that introduces a symmetry to the overall composition: the animal just raises one of its hind legs and scratches behind its ear, which immediately makes it all much more casual. This, too, was an object meant to be enjoyed by a scholar, and it relates very clearly to a similar jade bear that was excavated recently in an area of northwestern China where we know Han imperial tombs were located. So there's every reason to believe that the piece we have here was originally intended for a noble patron."

We know it came to the Sackler Gallery from a noble patron—its most recent owner, Arthur M. Sackler. And there's every reason to believe that because of his generous gift of the gallery and its contents, the Smithsonian Institution will become the leading center for the study of Asian art in the Western world. □

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(Continued from page 132) room with an expansive view of San Francisco Bay. Each year during the Christmas season the Wilseys host an enormous cocktail party. Prior to the addition of the garden room, Dede would tent over the terrace to accommodate her more than three hundred guests. Two years ago, however, it was so windy that the tent almost blew away, prompting the Wilseys to consider adding on a permanent room. Robert Swatt came up with the original plans, which were executed by architects Porter & Steinwedell along with Michael Taylor. Al Wilsey originated the idea of the skylight, which can open or close at the mere flick of a switch.

Even though he did not live to see its completion, Taylor was involved in the planning of the garden room throughout most of the eighteen months it took to finish. Not a day went by without Dede and Michael's conversing and the garden room became the one big concession to the designer. She smiles, "I decided that I did want *one* Michael Taylor room after all. Especially when I realized we had to use white or everything would fade, and we could have overstuffed couches because of the proportions of the room."

Taylor's unique sense of scale is evident throughout this dramatic space. His oversize sofa and four chairs surround a large seventeenth-century Italian marble inlaid coffee table. There's a wonderful stone table, also designed by Taylor, on top of which sits a stone pot filled with pink cyclamen. Pink silk covers the seats of the surrounding black-lacquer Directoire chairs. Across the room is Dede Wilsey's large malachite collection ("I love that shade of green"), all adding subtle touches of color in this white-on-white room with its off-white marble floors, white walls, white furniture.

Surveying the new addition, Dede Wilsey mentions that it is difficult for her to remember what it looked like before: "It's as if this room has always been here. It has really opened up the entire house for entertaining. Its debut was last year during the San Francisco Fall Antiques Show. We had cocktails here in the garden room. It was a beautiful night and everyone was out on the balcony. We then had a dinner for 24 in our dining room."

The dining room, like the living room, is traditional: an eighteenth-century Waterford crystal chandelier, from a palace in India, hangs above an antique English mahogany table; on one of the yellow-lacquer side walls an eighteenth-century chinoiserie cabinet houses an extensive collection of Flora Danica china. Yet a metal Lynda Benglis sculpture hanging against a mirrored panel adds a striking contemporary touch to this lovely room, which opens onto the spacious entrance hall. There, black and white marble floors, fluted columns, a curved stairway, and two Rodin bronzes speak to tradition, while a large abstract painting by Carlos Loarca dominates.

The Wilseys also have superb paintings by Armand Guillaumin, Gustave Loiseau, and Theodore Earl Butler, who was the son-in-law of Monet. And everywhere, adding even more color and a delicate scent, are roses. Dede Wilsey's hobby is roses; over 70 varieties are grown at the Wilseys' Napa Valley ranch, where they spend most weekends. "It takes me about two hours every Sunday to cut and strip my roses. Then I transport them to San Francisco in special boxes Al had made. Mondays I arrange them for every room in the house." □

Editor: Dorothea Walker

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(Continued from page 178) the gravel drives raked, and the great ornamental trees placed with an eye to the view. Two great locusts, brought from Philadelphia in the 1830s, have survived storms and cold. A stand of white pines opposite the schoolroom where we sit were planted by my hostess's grandfather as a screen at the edge of the side lawn. This secondary zone of lawn was always the dividing line between the farm and the grounds, not unlike the larger-scale divisions in the parks of English country houses. "The principle was the same here," my hostess comments, "but, of course, the English did it on a much grander scale."

Behind the house lies the third zone: the gardens themselves. Laid out by her great-grandmother during the late 1820s and the 1830s, the garden, like the house, has changed in many small ways without losing the essential integrity of its design. The house is a Greek Revival cube with a service wing stretching back from one side. A long axis, formed by the central hall, extends through the house from front to back. From the entry one sees the picturesque view of the meadows, lakes, and hills, changed today only by the great size of the ancient trees. From the pillared veranda at the back the view is of the garden, the central line of which continues the axis of the hall.

"Deer and rabbits love lilies, but the lilies and ferns love it here anyway"

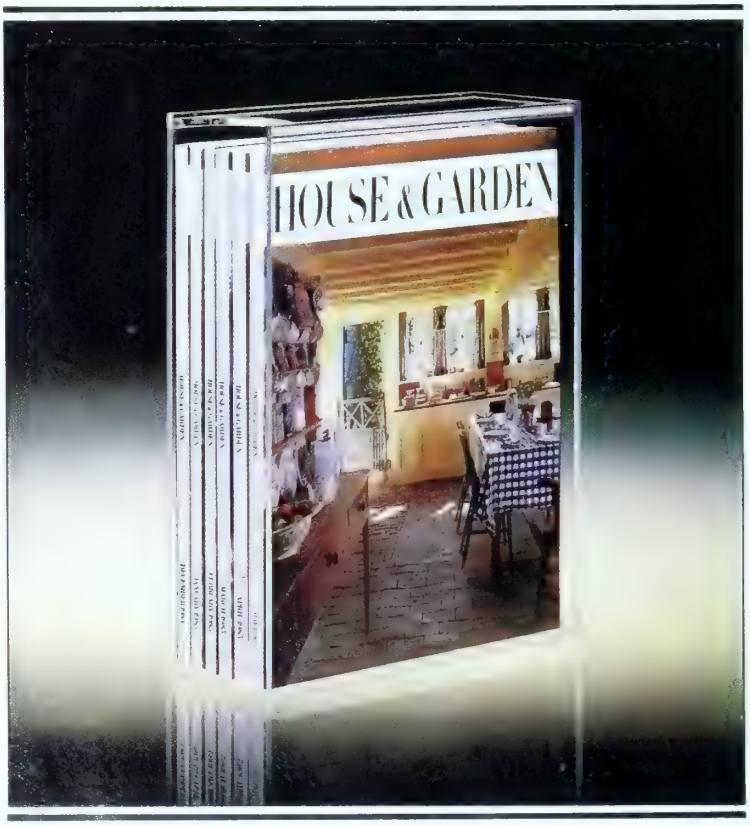
The garden is also divided into two sections: the manicured back lawn and the inner area—now demarcated by a fence—where the grass is velvety and impossibly weed-free. Although the granite gateposts and iron gates at the entrance to this inner sanctum were added in this century, they mark the original boundaries of the formal part of the garden.

The overall layout is simple, typical of gardens in this region during the nineteenth century. Wide flower beds, which border a long central walk, are flanked by wide rectangular lawns. These lawns are in turn edged with more flower beds.

Woods at the back of the garden divide the civilized areas from the pastures, which are still grazed by holstein cows and bordered by a small brook. This wall of dark green is broken by two gates, which allow a distant perspective to the hills beyond. Although the boundaries of the property are now limited, the view has not altered from the days when the Meadows spread out to include all the land in sight.

Halfway down the central walk the garden opens into a circle at the center of which is a fountain and pond, put in early in the century, during my hostess's childhood. It had been preceded by a rounded hump or mound—presumably planted. Deemed unattractive, it was replaced without changing the spatial configuration. My hostess's

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mother added the granite benches as a pleasant place to stop and sit.

My hostess recalls that the paths, now graveled, were originally covered with shredded tanbark—"in which we could drag our feet to make lovely patterns." There was in days past a complex network of paths encircling the gardens. "My mother removed all the elaborate paths after she took over the place. At the same time—early in my childhood—she replaced the tanbark with gravel, since the lay of the land allowed it to wash away if not attended to constantly. Mother simplified the gardens elaborated by Grandmother in the Victorian period. Mother also added the narrow central bed in the second leg of the main walk. In my memory it has always held begonias." The brick borders on the flower beds are unchanged from their original use in the nineteenth century.

From the center fountain the walk continues to a smaller terminal circle, retaining its smaller ivy-covered mound and sundial. The nineteenth-century garden had had at this end a curved hedgerow of tightly spaced cedars into which was set a gate. The cedar hedge collapsed about thirty years ago and was replaced with a low curved stone wall. "We followed the same outline exactly as it was."

Between the low wall and the woods is a lush stand of ferns put in in the late nineteenth century by my hostess's grandfather. In the rich soil and damp climate here they thrive and grow to a yard high. A second fence and gate—"to keep out deer and rabbits"—leads into the woods, then down a bank of orange daylilies "put in by Mother in the teens to hold what was then a rather muddy embankment—both deer and rabbits love lilies, but the lilies and ferns love it here anyway."

A barn-red Chinese footbridge spans the little creek separating the woods from the fields. The bridge, made by a local builder about 25 years ago, was my hostess's idea. "A dear friend of ours—a military engineer—was here as a houseguest, and I thought it might be a worthwhile project. He drew it up in great detail, specifying all the different pieces of millwork so that the carpenter merely had to cut it and assemble it—no mean feat!"

The flowers in the garden are fairly straightforward rather than exotic. "It's a mistake to bring in things that won't thrive and shouldn't be here. I have tried to continue those things that do well and to create as much color as possible without creating a lot of extra work."

In the spring there are daffodils, which have been naturalized around the grounds. "There used to be more in the garden, but they've been crowded out. Of course, there are crocuses, but the squirrels tend to take them where they want. Tulips are wonderfully colorful and we have many early on, but they get exhausted after a few years and you have to replace them. Roses are difficult in this climate because of the cruel winters, but they're here and you have to keep at them. We usually put in a few new ones every year."

The first spring ritual is to uncover all of the plants that are wrapped or tented in the winter and to assess the damage and see what has survived in what condition. "Once we've gotten a look at what the rabbits have eaten, I get bright ideas about what to do next. We always begin by filling out the beds and putting in the unavoidable annuals—begonias, lobelia, and the like."

"Delphiniums—blue, purple, and white—do very well as perennials here. Hyacinths are excellent in the spring, too." Coralbells flourish in the borders, and some of the hardier azaleas can be seen. "Downstate you can plant azaleas easily—even a few miles south—but here they struggle, and only the strongest survive well."

Some of the most flamboyant spring flowers are the peonies. The large fluffy red and pink common variety, and some single ivory-hued blooms, which were put in by my hostess's grandmother, abound. Dozens of these plants are cut back in the fall and come up more luxuriant each spring. These are the classic peony types, which thrive in this region and provide fragrant cuttings for the house.

"My own favorites," notes my hostess, "are the tree peonies. Tree peonies are rarer, longer-lived, and more like shrubs—they are not cut back in the fall. They bloom earlier in the spring than the common type." Percy Saunders of Clinton, New York, was the great hybridizer of tree and herbaceous peonies, deriving a wide array of colors from the basic red, white, and pink Oriental plants he brought in from China and Japan. He created many tree peony types for the peony beds at Henry Francis du Pont's Winterthur gardens. Half of the estate's tree peonies my hostess's mother acquired from Saunders, and the remainder my hostess acquired from his daughter, Silvia, who managed the business after her father's death. The ten kinds of tree peony in the garden include exotics such as 'Harvest', a wheat-colored single bloom; 'Marchioness', a soft yellow suffused with pink; 'Silver Sails', a very pale yellow; and the wisteria-hued 'Kamada Fugi'. The deep, deep red of 'Impumon' holds the closest tie to its original Chinese forebear.

Not all of the Saunders peonies are the tree type. "Two of my favorites are single common variety hybrids of a very rich pink with yellow centers. They're the 'Julia Grant' and the 'Grace Root', though I have trouble telling them apart." This last is for my benefit, as the former was named for my then-teenage mother, and the latter for my great-aunt Mrs. Edward Wales Root, a neighbor and longtime friend of the Saunders family in Clinton.

"I have four men who work in the gardens now. Two of them grew up on this property and have worked all their lives on the farm or in the gardens." My hostess oversees and makes suggestions—her "bright ideas."

"We'll settle down in the fall and make plans for spring changes. Then by spring we'll have forgotten most of what we planned and carry on as we always have." But not everything grows as wished. "The trellis on the rear piazza has clematis, which do nicely enough. But I've never had much luck with the more exotic blooms. I lose some every year and must replace them. On the other hand down by the barn, where in my youth we had the manure heap, they grow beautifully with no fussing. That's all part of keeping a garden like this—you can force plants to do only so much. In the long run it's up to nature.

"I hope that some of the younger generation of my family will take over the Meadows after me, and my goal is to make it manageable for them." As it did after my hostess came here to live again, things will change at the Meadows—how could they not for the fifth generation?—but with any luck the atmosphere will stay the same. □